The Communicant's Companion:

OR,

INSTRUCTIONS and HELPS

For the Right Receiving of the LORD's SUPPER.

The item, Marie

Books Printed for Tho. Parkhurst, at the Bible and Three Crowns in Cheapside.

PERSONAL AND A COMPANY

A Discourse concerning Meekness and Quietness of Spirit; to which is added a Sermon, shewing that the Christian Religion is not a Sect, and yet that it is every where spoken against.

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These five by Mathew Henry, Minister of the Gospel.

THE

Communicant's Companion.

or the bible, no Three Crowns

Instructions and helps

For the Right Receiving of the

Lord's Supper.

By MATTHEW HENRY,
Minister of the Gospel.

LONDON:

Printed for Chomas Patkhurst at the Bible and Three Crowns, the lower end of Cheapside near Mercers Chappel. 1704.

To flee Reader

Here hamply offer you venifian Kesders) rome Affiliance in that great and good Work holds by rou have to THE STATE OF THE PARTY AND ASSESSED. Hour bivision swalled interesty Zagy? Enous People Malifons of Help an willing to use, the thelps they have White Owigan page our refreshment water me to elle the deposit it About the service without a property refore and Respect to the many excellain Performances of this kind, which we are sixedy biels d'exch, done he far briter thands there mires a What years should following arther a melastrate arrest. Fritzell The state of the s described Gleanings without robotals their Sheavest' Lord A is come as stand n Nucleus semals (1948) provide a supplication of the will of Charges rear where Chap Authorities in a little of the party of the of parameter base glassistation aft awa

Here humbly offer you (Christian Readers) some Assistance in that great and good Work which you have to do, and are concern'd to do well, when you attend the Table of the Lord: Work wherein I have observed most serious People desirous of Help, and willing to use the Helps they have: Which I confess was one thing that in-

vited me to this Undertaking.

I offer this Service with all due Deference and Respect to the many excellent Performances of this kind, which we are already bless'd with, done by far better Hands than mine: Who yet have not so fully gather'd in this Harvest, but that those who come after may gather up plentiful Gleanings without robbing their Sheaves. Lord it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room; room enough to enlarge upon a Subject so copious, and of so great a Compass that it cannot be exhausted.

I do this also with a just Sense of my own Unworthiness, and Unsitness to

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bear

bear the Vessels of the Lord, and to do any Service in his Sanctuary. Who am I, and what is my Father's House, that I should have the Honour to be a Door-Keeper in the House of my God, to shew his Guests the way to his Table? And that I should be employ'd thus to hew Wood, and draw Water for the Congregation of the Lord? I reckon it true Preferment, and by the Grace of God, his Free Grace, I am what I am, 'Tis Service which is its own Recompence; Work which is its own Wages. In helping to feed others, we may feast our selves, for our Master hath provided that the Month of the Ox be not muzzled when he treads out the Corn. For my part, I would not exchange the Pleasure of Converse with the Scriptures and Divine Things for all the Delights of the Sons and Daughters of Men, and the peculiar Treasure of Kings and Provinces. 'Twas a noble Saying of the Marquels of Vica, Let their Money perish with them, who esteem all the Wealth of this World worth one Hour's Communion with God in Jesus Christ.

In doing this, I hope I can truly fay, My Desire and Design is to contribute

some-

fomething to the Faith, Holiness, and Joy of those that in this Solemn Ordinance have given up their Names to the Lord Jesus. And if God by his Grace will make this Endeavour some way serviceable to that end, I have what I wilh, I have what I aim at, and it will not be the first time that Praise hath been perfected, and Strength ordained out of the

Mouth of Babes and Sucklings.

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In this Effay I have an Eye particularly to that little Handful of People among: whom I have been (in much Weakness) ministring in these Holy Things now Seventeen Years; during all which time through the good Hand of our God upon us, we have never once been disappointed of the stated Solemnities either of our New Moons or our Sabbaths. As I delign'd my Scripture Catechifm, and the other little one that follow'd it, to be a Present, and perhaps e're long it may prove my Legacy to the Young Ones, the Lambs of the Flock; fo I recommend this to the Adult, and leave it with them, being desirous that the Sheep we are charg'd to feed, may go in and out, and find Pasture. And I earnestly wish A 4

wish that both these may prove successful Expedients to preserve some of those things they have been taught from being quite forgotten; and that after my Decease, they and theirs will have those things

always in remembrance.

And (lastly) I send this abroad under the Protection and Blessing of Heaven; with a hearty Prayer to God to forgive what is mine; that is, whatever is amiss and defective in the Performance; and graciously to accept what is his own; that is, whatever is good and profitable. Hoping that if God pardon my Defects and Insirmities, my Friends also will overlook them: And that if he favourably accept my Endeavours through Christ, they also will accept them: For truly it is the top of my Ambition to approve my self

A Faithful Servant to Christ and Souls.

Chefter June 21.

Matth. Henry.

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CONTENTS.

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THE Names by which this Ordidinance is usually called Page 1.

Sign and an Oath. 2. The Lord's Supper; a Supper, our Lord's Supper.

3. The Communion; having in it communion with Christ, and with the Universal Church.

4. The Eucharitt; Christ in the Institution of it, gave thanks, and we in the Participation.

5. The Feist; a Royal Frast, a Marriage

The Contents.

riage Feaft, a Feaft of Memorial, a Feaft of Dedication, a Feaft upon a Sacrifice, and a Feaft upon a Covenant.

CHAP. II.

The Nature of this Ordinance Page 14.

1, It is a Commemorating Ordinance, in remembrance of the Person of Christ, as an Absent Friend, and of the Death of Christ as an Ancient Favour. Hereby wepreserve the Memory of it in the Church, and revive the Remembrance of it in our own Hearts. 2 It is a Confessing Ordinance; we profess our Value and Esteem. for Christ Crucified, and our Dependance upon, and Confidence in Christ crucified. 3. It is a Communicating Ordinance 3. Christ and all his Benefits are here communicated to us, and are here to be received by us. "4. It is a Covenanting Ordinance; it is the New Testament, and the New Covenant, open'd distinully; God seals to us to be to us a God, and we feal to bim to be to bim a People.

CHAP. III.

An Invitation to this Ordinance Page 31.
All things are ready open'd in many Particulars: Therefore come, 1. Those that

The Contents

are unmeet for this Ordinance, must qualify themselves, and come, a serious Address to such, in three things. 2. Those that are in some measure meet for it, must enter themselves; Young People reason'd with in four Questions; those that are cold and indifferent, put upon considering two things; those that are timorous, counseld and encouraged in two things. 3. Those that have given up themselves to God in this Ordinance, must be constant; this largely urg'd.

CHAP. IV.

Helps for Self-Examination before we come to this Ordinance Page 59.

What it is to examine our felves, illustrated in fix Similitudes, particularly fix Questions to be put to our selves. 1. What am I? Four Enquiries by which to find out what our Spiritual State is: Two Directions what to do thereupon. 2. What have I done? Twelve Questions to be put to our selves to bring to remembrance, and Directions thereupon. 3. What am I doing? In two things. 4. What Ground do I get? Four Questions by which to try our Growth in Grace. 5. What do I want? What Grace? What Comfort. 6. What shall I resolve to do? In two things.

The Contents.

CHAP. V.

Instructions for renewing our Covenants with God in our Preparation for this Ordinance Page 86.

I. In what method we must renew our Covenant with God. 1. We must repent of our Sins, by which we have render'd our selves unworthy to be taken into Covenant: Three things to be lamented. 2. We must renounce the Devil, the World, and the Flesh: Open'd in three things. 3. We must receive Christ as offer'd to us, consenting to his Grace, and to his Government. 4. We must resign and give up our selves to God in Christ; devote our selves to his Praise, and submit our selves to his Power; in three things. 5. We must resolve to abide by it : Open'd in two things. 6. We must rely on the Righteousness and Strength of Christ berein: Open'd in two things. II: After what manner we must renew our Covenant : Intelligently, Consideratety, Humbly, Chearfully, and in Sincerity.

The Contents

CHAP. VI.

Help for Meditation and Prayer in our Preparation for this Ordinance Page 109.

I. Of Meditation open'd in general: 'Tis Thought engag'd and Thought enflam'd. Particularly meditate, 1. On the Sinfulness and Misery of Man's sallen State.

2. The Glory of God's Attributes in Man's Redemption.

3. The Person of the Redemer, and his Undertakings.

4. His Sufferings.

5. His Present Glories.

6. The Riches of the New Covenant.

7. The Communion of Saints, and the Happiness of Heaven: All these enlarged upon. II. Of Prayer; why we must pray before the Sacrament, and what we must pray for: Four things to be pray'd for.

CHAP. VII.

Directions in what Frame of Spirit we should come to, and attend upon this Ordinance Page 132.

1. With a Fixedness of Thought. 2. With an Easiness and Calmness of Affection.
3. With a Holy Awe and Reverence of the Divine

The Contents.

Divine Majesty. 4. With a Holy Jealousy over our selves, and a humble Sense of our own Unworthiness, suspecting our selves, and abasing our selves. 5. With a gracious Considence, as Children to a Eather.

6. With Earnest Desires towards God.

7. With raised Expectations. 8. With rejoicing and Thanksgiving: Two things, matter of Joy. 9. In Charity with all Men, and a sincere Affection to all good Christians, bearing ill will to none, and good will to all.

CHAP. VIII.

Some Account of the Affecting Sights that are to be seen by Faith in this Ordinance Page 153

I. In general, come and fee the Lamb that had been stain, opening the Seals. II. In particular.

1. See the Evil of Sin.

2. See the Justice of God: In two things.

3. See the Love of Christ: Open'd in six Properties of that Love.

4. See the Conquest of Satan: How Christ conquer'd Satan in two things.

5. See the worth of Souls: Two Inferences from that Sight.

6. See the Purchase of the Blessings of the New Covenant: Open'd in two things.

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The Contents.

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1.

Same Account of the Precious Benefits which are to be received by Faith in this Ordinance Page 172.

The Pardon and Forgiveness of our Sins, a renewed Pardon of daily Trespasses, and a confirmed Pardon of all Trespasses.

The Adoption of Sons: The Priviledges of Adoption, and the Spirit of Adoption.

Reace and Satisfaction in our Minds: Open din two things. A. Supplies of Grace, consirming Gracious Habits, quickning Gracious Alts: Instances of both.

The Earness of Eternal Bliss and foy, the Assurances of it, and the Foretasts of it.

CHAP X

Helps for the Exciting of those Pions and Devout Affections which should be working in us while we attend this Ordinance Page 195.

Here we must be sorrowing for Sin: Three things here to excite this Sorrow. 2. Confiding in Christ, in his Power, in his Promise. 3. Delighting in God: Three things to be thought of with pleasure. 4. Admiring the Mysteries and Miracles of Redeeming Love; seven things instanced in as marvellous.

The Contentsi

vellous. 5. Caring what we shall render; seven things which we must render.

CHAP. XI.

Directions concerning the Solemn Vows we are to make to God in this Ordinance Page 217.

Four Reasons why at the Lord's Supper we must make Vows. 1. We must by solemn Vows bind our selves out from all Sin; largely open'd in five things. 2. We must bind our selves up to all Duty: to the Duties of Religion in general; open'd in four things: to some Duties of Religion especially; open'd in four things: Duties which we have most neglected; which we have experienc'd most Benefit by; which we have most Opportunity for, and the Duties of our respective Callings and Relations.

CHAP. XII.

Directions concerning the Frame of our Spirits when we come from this Ordinance Page 237.

1. We must come from this Ordinance admiring the Condescensions of the Divine Grace to us: Considering our Meanness by Nature, and our Vileness by Sin. 2. Lamenting our manifold Defects, either trembling,

The Contents.

or at least blushing. 3. Rejoicing in Christ and the great Love wherewith he has loved us; expressing it self in Praises to God, and Encouragements to our selves. 4. Much quicken'd to every good Work. 5. With a watchful Fear of Satan's Wiles, and a sirm Resolution to stand our Ground against 'em. Let us therefore Fear, and therefore Fix. 6. Praying, That God will sulfil his Promises to us, and enable us to sulfil ours to him. 7. With a charitable Disposition to love our sellow Christians, to give to the Poor, and forgive Injuries. 8. Longing for Heaven. Our Complaints and our Comforts should make us long for Heaven.

CHAP. XIII.

An Exhortation to order the Conversation aright after the Ordinance Page 265.

In general we must live so as, i. To adorn our Prosession. 2. To sulfil our Engagements. 3. To make grateful Returns for Favours shew'd us. 4. To preserve the Comforts we have tasted. 5. To evidence our Communion with God. In particular we must be, 1. Sincerely devout and pious. 2. Conscientiously just and honest. 3. Religiously meek and Peaceable. 4. Strictly sober and chast. 5. Abundantly charitable and beneficent. 6. More weaned from this World, and more taken up with another.

The Contents.

CHAP. XIV.

Some Words of Comfort which this Ordinance Speaks to serious Christians Page 285.

Four things promis'd. This Ordinance may comfort us, 1. Against the Remembrance of our former Sins and Provocations.

2. Against the Sense of our Sins of daily Instructions.

3. Against the salinst the sad Remainders of Indwelling Corruption.

4. Against prevailing Doubts and Fears about the Spiritual State.

5. Against the Troubles and Calamities of this Life.

6. Against the Fears of Death.

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Minister of Jesus Christ, William Fenner.

OR,

Instructions and Helps

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For the Right Receiving of the

LORD's SUPPER.

CHAP. I.

The Names by which this Ordinance is usually called.

N discoursing of this Great and Solemn Ordinance, which every Serious Christian looks upon with a Peculiar Regard and Veneration, because I purpose, as God shall enable me, to open, as well the Dostrine as the Duty of it, it will be proper enough, and, I hope, prostable, to take some notice of the several Names by which it is known.

First, We call it the Sacrament: This is the Name we commonly give it, but improperly, because it doth not distinguish it from the Ordinance of Bap=

Baptism, which is as much a Sacrament as this; a Sacrament which we have all received, are all bound by, and are concerned to improve, and live up to: But when we call this Ordinance the Sacrament, we ought to mind our felves that it is a Sacrament: That is, it is a Sign, and it is an Oath.

1. It is a Sign, an outward and visible Sign of an Inward and Spiritual Grace; for such Sacraments are defigned to be. It is a Parable to the Eye; and in it God useth Similitudes, as he did of old by his Servants the Prophets. (Hof. 12. 10.) In it Christ tells us earthly things, (Joh. 3. 12.) that thereby we may come to be more familiarly acquainted, and more warmly affected with Spiritual and Heavenly In it Christ speaks to us in our own Language, and accommodates himself to the Capaciries of our present State. Man consists of Body and Soul, and the Soul admits Impressions, and exerts its Powers by the Body: Here's an Ordinance therefore, which confifts of Body and Soul too; wherein Christ and the Benefits of the New Covenant are in the Instituted Elements of Bread and Wine set before us, and offer'd to us. live in a World of Sense, not yet in the World of Spirits; and because we therefore find it hard to look above the things that are seen, we are directed in Sacrament to look through them, to those things not seen, which are represented by them. things meerly sensible, may not improve the Advantage they have from our present State, wholly to engross our Thoughts and Cares, in compassion to our Infirmity, Spiritual Things are in this Ordinance made in a manner fensible.

Let us therefore rest contented with this Sign which Christ hath appointed, in which he is evidently set forth, crucified among us, (Gal. 3. 1.) and not think it can be any Honour to him, or Advan-

tage to our selves, but on the contrary, a Dishonour to him, and an Injury to our selves, to represent by Images and Pictures, the same things which this Ordinance was design'd to be the Representation of. If Infinite Wisdom thought this Sign sufficient, and most proper to affect the Heart and excite Devotion, and stampt it accordingly with

an Institution, let us acquiess in it.

Yet let us not rest contented with the Sign only, but converse by Faith with the Things signified, else we receive the Grace of God in this Appointment in vain; and Sacraments will be to us what Parables were to them that were wilfully blind, blinding them the more, Mark 4. 11, 12. What will it avail us to have the Shadow without the Substance, the Shell without the Kernel, the Letter without the Spirit? As the Body without the Scul is dead, so our seeing and receiving Bread and Wine, if therein we see not and receive not, Christ crucisied is

dead also.

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2. It is an Oath. That's the ancient Signification of the word Sacrament: The Romans call'd the Oath which Souldiers took to be true to their General, Sacramentum militare: And our Law still uses it in this sense, dicunt Juper Sacramentum Juum, they say upon their Oath; so that to take the Sacrament is to take an Oath, a folemn Oath by which we bind our Souls with a Rond unto the Lord, Num. It is an Oath of Allegiance to the Lord Iefus, by which we engage our felves to be his dutiful and loyal Subjects, acknowledging him to be our rightful Lord and Soveraign. It is as a Freeman's Oath, by which we enter our felves Members of Christ's Mistical Body, and oblige our selves to observe the Laws, and seek the Good of that 7erulalem which is from above, that we may enjoy the Priviledges of that great Charter by which it is An Oath is an Appeal to God's sncorporated. B 2 KnowKnowledge of our Sincerity and Truth in what we affert, or promise; and in this Ordinance we make such an Appeal as St. Peter did, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee, Joh. 21. 17. An Oath is an Imprecation of God's Wrath upon our selves, if we deal false, and wilfully prevarieate; and something of that also there is in this Sacrament; for if we continue in League with Sin while we pretend to covenant with God, we eat and

drink Judgment to our selves, I Cor. 11.29.

Let us therefore (according to the Character of a virtuous Man, Eccl. 9. 2.) fear this Oath; not fear to take it, for it is our Duty with all possible Solemnity, to oblige our felves to the Lord; but fear to break it, for Oaths are not to be jested with. God hath said it, and hath sworn it by himself. Ifa. 45. 23. Unto me every Tongue shall swear: But he hath faid also, Fer. 4. 2. that we must swear to him, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness: and having fworn, we must perform it, Pfal. 119.106. If we come to this Sacrament carelessy and inconsiderately, we incur the Guilt of Rash Swearing: If we go away from this Sacrament, and walk contrary to the Engagements of it, we incur the Guilt of False Swearing. Even Natural Religion teacheth Men to make Conscience of an Oath; much more doth the Christian Religion teach us to make Conscience of this Oath, to which God is not only a Witness, but a Party.

Secondly, We call it the Lord's Supper, and very properly, for so the Scripture calls it, I Cor. 11.20. where the Apostle reproving the Irregularities that were among the Corinthians in the Administration of this Ordinance, tells them, This is not to eat the Lord's Supper.

1. It is a Supper. A Supper is a stated Meal forthe Body; this is so for the Soul, which stands inas much need of its Daily Bread as the Body doth. Supper was then accounted the principal Meal; this Ordinance is so among Christ's Friends, and in his Family; 'tis the most solemn Entertainment. 'Tiscall'd a Supper because it was first instituted in the Evening, and at the close of the Passover Supper, which though it ty not us always to administer it about that time, because it would be inconvenient for Religious Assemblies; yet it signifies, (1) That Christ now in the end of the World, in the declining part of its day, as the great Evening Sacrifice bath appea ed to put away Sin, Heb. 9. 26. This Glorious Discovery was referv'd for us, upon whom the ends of the World are come. I Cor. 10. 11. (2) That Comfort in Christ is intended for those only that dwell in God's House, that are Night-Lodgers there, and not only Day-Visitants; and for those only that have done the Work of the Day in its Day, according as the Duty of every Dayrequired. They only that work with Christ shall eat with him. That the chief Bleffings of the New Covenant are referv'd for the Evening of the Day of our Life. The Everlasting Feast is a Supper designed for us when we have accomplished as a Hireling our Day. and come home at Night.

2. It is the Lord's Supper; the Lord Christ's Supper. The Apostle in his Discourse concerning this Ordinance, 1 Cor. 11. 23, Sc. all along calls Christ the Lord, and seems to lay an Emphasis upon it; For as the Ordaining of this Sacrament was an Act of his Dominion, and as his Churches Lord he appointed it; so in receiving this Sacrament we own his Dominion, and acknowledge him to be our Lord. This also puts an Honour upon the Ordinance, and makes it look truly great; however, to a Carnal Eye it have no Form nor Comever.

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liness, that it is the Supper of the Lord. The Sanction of this Ordinance is the Authority of Christ; the Substance of this Ordinance is the Grace of Christ. It is celebrated in obedience to him, in Remembrance of him, and for his Praise. Justly is it call'd the Lord's Supper, for 'tis the Lord Jesus that fends the Invitation, makes the Provision, gives the Entertainment: In it we feed upon Christ, for he is the Bread of Life; we feed with Christ, for he is our Beloved, and our Friend, and he it is that bids us welcome to his Table. In it Christ sups with us, and we with him; He doth us the Honour to sup with us, though he must bring his own Entertainment along with him; he gives us the Happiness of Supping with him upon the Dainties of Heaven, Rev. 3. 20.

Let our Eye therefore be to the Lord, to the Lord Christ, and to the Remembrance of his Name in this Ordinance. We see nothing here if we see not the Beauty of Christ; we taste nothing here, if we taste not the Love of Christ. The Lord must be look'd upon as the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, and all in all in this Solemnity. If we receive not Christ Jesus the Lord here, we have

the Supper, but not the Lord's Supper.

Thirdly, we call it the Communion, the Holy Communion; and fitly do we call it so; for,

1. In this Ordinance we have Communion with Christ our Head; Truly our Fellowship is with him, 1 30h. 1.3. He here manifests himself to us, and gives out to us his Graces and Comforts; we here set our selves before him, and tender him the grateful Returns of Love and Duty. A kind correspondence between Christ and our Souls is kept up in this Ordinance; such as our present state will admit. Christ by his Word and Spirit abides in

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us; we by Faith and Love abide in him: Here therefore where Christ seals his Word and offers his Spirit, and where we exercise out Faith, and have our Love inflam'd, there is Communion between us and Christ.

This Communion supposeth Union; this Fellowthip supposeth Friendship: for, Can two walk together except they be agreed? Amos 3. 3. We must therefore in the Bond of an Everlasting Covenant, join our felves to the Lord, and twist Interests with him, and then pursuant thereto, concern him in all the Concerns of our Happiness, and concern our felves in all the Concerns of his Glory; and this is Communion.

2. In this Ordinance we have Communion with the Universal Church, even with all that in eve y place call on the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours, I Cor. 1. 2. Hereby we profile, testify, and declare, that we being many, are en Bread, and one Body, by virtue of our common Relation to one Lord Jesus Christ, for we are all Partakers of that one Bread, Christ the Bread of Life fignified and communicated in the Sacramental Bread, 1 Cor. 10. 17. All true Christians, though they are many, yet they are one, and we express our Consent to, and Complacency in that Union, by partaking of the Lord's Supper. I fay, Though they are many, that is, though they are numerous, yet as a vast number of Creatures make one World, governed by one Providence, so a vast number of Christians make one Church, animated by one Spirit, the Soul of that great Body. Though they are various, far distant from each other in place, of distinct Societies, different Attainments, and divers Apprehensions in lesser things, yet all meeting in Christ, they are one. They are all incorporated in one and the same Church, all interested in one and the same Cove-B 4

nant, all stamp'd with one and the same Image, Partakers of the same New and Divine Nature, and all intitled to one and the same Inheritance. In the I ord's Supper we are made to drink into one Spirit, (1 Cor. 12. 13.) and therefore in attending on that Ordinance, we are concern'd, not only to preserve, but to cultivate and improve Christian Love and Charity; for what will this Badge of Union avail us, without the Unity of the Spirit?

Fourthly, We call it the Eucharist; so the Greek Church call'd it, and we from them. It signifies a Thanksgiving; and it is so call'd,

1. Because Christ in the Institution of it, gave Thanks, I Cor. 11. 24. It should seem that Christ fiequently offered up his Prayers in the Form of Thanksgiving, as Joh. 11: 41. Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me; and so he blessed the Bread and the Cup, by giving thanks over them; as the true Melchizedeck, who when he brought forth Bread and Wine to Abraham, bleffed the mift High God, Gen. 14. 18, 20. Though our Saviour when he instituted this Sacrament, had a full prospect of hisapproaching Sufferings, with all their Aggravations, yet he was not thereby indispos'd for Thankfgiving; for praising God is Work that is never out of Season. Though the Captain of our Salvation was now but girding on the Harness, yet he gives thanks as though he had put it off; being confident of a glorious Victory; in the prospect of which, even before he took the Field, he did in this Ordinance divide the Spoils among his Followers, and give Gifts unto Men, Pfal. 68. 18.

2. Because we in the Participation of it, must give thanks likewise. It is an Ordinance of Thanksgiving, appointed for the joyful Celebrating of the Redeemer's Praises. The Sacrifice of Attonement

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Christ himself offered once for all, and it must not, it cannot be repeated; but Sacrifices of Acknowledgment, Christians must offer daily, that is, the Fruit of our Lips, giving thanks to his Name, Heb. 13. 15. The Cup of Salvation must be a Cup of Blessing, with which, and for which, we must bless God, as the Jews were wont to do very solemnly at the close of the Passover Supper: At which time Christ chose to institute this Sacrament, because he intended it for a perpetual Thanksgiving, till we come to the World of Praise.

Come therefore and let us fing unto the Lord in this Ordinance; let the High Praises of our Redeemer be in our Mouths, and in our Hearts; would we have the Comfort, let him have the Praise of the great things he hath done for us: Let us remember, that Thanksgiving is the Business of the Ordinance, and let that turn our Complaints into Praises; for whatever matter of Complaints we find in our selves, in Christ we find abundant Matter for Praise; and that's the Pleasant Subject which in this Ordinance we should dwell upon.

Fifthly, We call it the Feast, the Christian Feast. Christ our Passover being sacrificed for us, in this Ordinance we Keep the Feast, I Cor. 5. 8. They that communicate, are said to Feast with us, Jude 12. This Name, tho' not commonly us'd, yet is very fignificant; for it is such a Supper as is a Feast. Gospel Preparations are frequently compar'd to a Feast, as Isa. 25. 8. Luk. 14. 16. The Guests are many, the Invitation folemn, and the Provision rich and plentiful, and therefore fitly is call'd a Feast, a Feast for Souls. A Feast is made for laughter, Eccl. 10. 19. so is this for Spiritual Joy; the Wine here is designed to make glad the Heart. A Feast is made for free Conversation, so is this for Communion between Heaven and Earth: At this B 5 BanBanquet of Wine, the Golden Scepter is held out to us, and this fair Proposal made, What is thy Petition, and it shall be granted thee.

Let us fee what kind of Feast it is.

1. It is a Royal Feast: A Feast like the Feast of a King, 1 Sam. 25. 36. i. e. a magnificent Feaft. 'Tis a Feast like that of King Abasuerus, Esth. 1. 3, 4, 5, a Feast for all his Servants, and designed. as that was, not only to shew his Good will to those whom he feasted, but to shew the Riches of his Glorious Kingdom, and the Honour of his excellent Majesty. The Treasures bid in Christ, even his unsearchable Riches, are here set open, and the Glories of the Redeemer illustriously displayed. He who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords; here issues out the same Orders that we find him giving, Rev. 19. 16, 17. Come gather your selves together to the Supper of the great God, and that must needs be a great Supper. The Wisest of Kings introduceth. Wisdom her self, as a Queen or Princess making this Feast, Prov. 9. 1, 2. Wisdom bath killed her Beasts, and mingled her Wine. At a Royal Feast the Provision we may be fure is rich and noble, such as becomes a King to give, tho' not such Beggars as we are to expect: The Welcome also we may be fure is free and generous; Christ gives like a King.

Let us remember that in this Ordinance we fet to eat with a Ruler, with the Ruler of Rulers, and therefore must consider diligently what is before us, and observe a Decorum, Prov. 23.1. He is a King that comes in to fee the Guests, Mat. 22. 11. and therefore we are concern'd to behave our selves

well.

2. It is a Marriage Feast: 'Tis a Feast made by a King at the Marriage of his Son; so our Saviour

represents it (Mat. 22. 2. 2.) not only to speak it exceeding rich and sumptious, and celebrated with extraordinary Expressions of Joy and Rejoicing, but because the Covenant here seal'd between Christ and his Church is a Marriage Covenant, fuch a Covenant as makes two one, Eph. 5. 31, 32. a Covenant founded in the dearest Love, founding the nearest Relation, and defigned to be perpetual. In this Ordinance. (1) we celebrate the Memorial of the Virtual Espousals of the Church to Christ, when he died upon the Cross, to sanctify and clear se it, that he might present it to himself, Eph. 5. 26. That was the Day of his Espousals, the Day of the Gladness of his Heart. (2) The Actual Espousa's of Believing Souls to Christ are here folemniz'd, and that Agreement ratified, Cant. 2. 16. My Beloved is mine and I ambis. The Soul that renounces all other Lovers which stand in competition with the Lord Jesus, and joins it self by Faith and I ove to him only, is in this ordinance presented as a chast Virgin to him, 2 Cor. 11.2. (3) A Pledge and Earnest of the Publick and Compleat Espousals of. the Church to Christ at his fecond Coming, is here gi en: Then the Marriage of the Lamb comes, Rev. 19.7. and we according to his promise hereby declare that we lock for it.

If we come to a Marriage Feast, we must not come without a Wedding Garment, that is, a Frame of Heart, and a Disposition of Soul agreeable to the Solemnity; conforming to the Nature and answering the Intentions of the Gospel, as it is exhibited to us in this Ordinance. Holy Garments, and Garments of Praise are the Wedding Garments? Put on Christ, put on the New Man, these are the Wedding Garments. In these we must with our Lamps in our Hands, as the Wise Virgins go forth, with all due observance, to attend the Royal Pride-

groom.

3. It is a Feast of Memorial, like the Feast of the Passover, of which it is said, Exed. 12. 14. This Day Shall be unto you for a Memorial, and you shall keep it a Feast to the Lord --- a Feast by an Ordinance for ever. The Deliverance of Israel out of Egypt was a Work of Wonder never to be forgotten; The Feast of Unleavened Bread was therefore instituted to be annually observed throughout all the Ages of the Jewish Church, as a solemn Memorial of that Deliverance, that the Truth of it being confirmed by this Traditional Evidence, might never be question'd, and that the Remembrance of it being frequently revived by this Service, might neverbelost by Tract of Time. Our Redemption by Christ from Sin and Hell, is a greater Work of Wonder than that was, more worthy to be remembred, and yet (the Benefits that flow from it being Spiritual) more apt to be forgotten: This Ordinance was therefore instituted, (and instituted in the Close of the Passover-Supper, as coming in the Room of it) to be a standing Memorial in the Church of the Glorious Atchievements of the Redeemer's Cross; the Victories obtained by it over the Powers of Darkness, and the Salvation wrought by it for the Children of Light. Thus the Lord hath made kis wonderful Works to be remembred, Pfal. I.I. 4.

4: It is a Feast of Dedication: Solomon made such a Feast for all Israel when he dedicated the Temple, 1 Kin. 8.65. as his Father David had done when he brought the Ark into the Tabernacle, 2 Sam. 6. 19. Even the Children of the Captivity kept the Dedication of the House of God with joy, Ezr. 6.16. In the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper we dedicate our selves to God as living Temples, Temples of the Holy Ghost, separated from every thing that is common and profane, and intirely devoted to the Service and Honour of God in Christ; to

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shew that we do this with chearfulness and full Satisfaction, and that it may be done with an agreeable Solemnity, this Feast is appointed for the doing of it, that we may like the People of Israel, when Solomon dismiss'd them from his Feast of Dedication, go to our Tents joyful and glad of Heart for all the Goodness that the Lord has done for

David his Servant, and for Israel his People.

5. It is a Feast upon a Sacrifice. This methinks is as proper a Notion of it as any other. It was the Law and Custom of Sacrifices, both among the Fews, and in other Nations, that when the Beaft-Offering was flain, the Blood sprinkled, the Fat and some select parts of it burnt upon the Altar. and the Priest had his share out of it; then the Remainder was given back to the Offerer, on which he and his Family and Friends feasted with joy. Hence we read of Israel after the Flesh-eating, the Sacrifices, and so partaking of the Altar, Cor. 10.18. that is, in token of their partaking of the Benefit of the Sacrifice, and their Joy therein. And this eating of the Sacrifices was a Religious Rite Expressive of their Communion with God in and by the Sacrifice.

Now (1.) Jesus Christ is the great and only Sacrifice, who by being once offered, perfected for ever them which are fanctified, and this Offering never needs to be repeated; that once was sufficient.

(2.) The Lord's Supper is a Feast upon this Sacrifice, in which we receive the Atonement, as the Expression is Rom. 5. 11. that is, we give consent to, and take complacency in the method which Infinite Wisdom hath taken of justifying and saving us, by the Merit and Mediation of the Son of God Incarnate. In feasting upon the Sacrifice we apply the Benefit of it to our selves, and ascribe the Praise of it to God with Joy and Thankfulness.

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CHAP. II.

The Nature of this Ordinance.

17 Hen the Jews according to God's Appointment observ'd the Passover yearly throughout their Generations, it was suppos'd that their Children would ask them, Woat mean ye by this Service? and they were directed what Answer to give to that Enquiry, Exod. 12. 26, 27. The Question may very fitly be ask'd concerning our Gospel Passover, What mean we by this Service? We come together in a publick and select Assembly of Baptized Christians, under the Conduct and Presidency of a Gospel Minister; we take Bread and Wine, sanctiant

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fied by the Word and Prayer, and we eat and drink together in a solemn Religious manner, with an Eye to a Divine Institution as our Warrant and Rule in so doing: This we do often; this all the Churches of Christ do, and have done in every Age from the death of Christ down to this day, and we doubt not but it will continue to be done till Time shall be no more: Now what is the true Intent and Meaning of this Ordinance? What did Christ design it for in the Institution? And what must we aim at in the Observation of it?

It was appointed to be a Commemorating Ordinance, and a Confessing Ordinance; a Communicating Ordinance, and a Covenanting Ordinance.

First, The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper is a Commemorating Ordinance. This Explication our Lord himself gave of it when he said Luke 22.19. Do this in remembrance of me. Lis Time Living and Living discussion. Do it for my Memorial; Do it for a remembrance of me; In this Ordinance he hath recorded his Name for ever, and this is his Memorial throughout all Generations. We are to do this,

1. In remembrance of the Person of Christ, as an Absent Friend of ours—— 'Tis a common Ceremony of Friendship, to lay up something in remembrance of a Friend we have valued, which we say, we keep for his sake, when he is gone, or is at a distance; As it is usual likewise to drink to one another, remembring such a Friend that's absent. Jesus Christ is our Beloved and our Friend, the best Friend that ever Soulshad; he is now absent, he hath lest the World and is gone to the Father, and the Heavens must contain him till the time of the Restitution of all things: Now this Ordinance is appointed for a Remembrance of him. We observe it in token of this, that though the Blessed Jesus be out

of fight, he is not out of mind. He that instituted this Ordinance, did as it were engrave this upon it for a Motto,

When this you fee, Remember me.

Remember him: Is there any danger of our forgetting him? If we were not wretchedly taken up with the World and the Fleih, and strangely careless in the concerns of our Souls, we could not forget him. But in consideration of the Treachery of our Memories, this Ordinance is appointed to mind us of Christ.

Ought we not to remember, and can we ever forget such a Friend as Christ is. A Friend that is our near and dear Relation; Bone of our Bone, Elesh of our Flesh, and not asham'd to call us Brethren. A Friend in Covenant with us, who puts more honour upon us than we deserve, when he calls us his Servants, and yet is pleas'd to call us Friends, Joh. 15. 15. A Friend that hath so wonderfully fignalliz'd his Friendship, and commended bis Love: He hath done that for us, which no Friend we have in the World did or could do for us; he hath laid down his Life for us, then when the Redemption of our Souls was grown to precious as otherwise to have ceased for ever. Surely we must forget our selves if ever we forget him, fince our Happiness is intirely owing to his Kindness.

Ought we not to remember, and can we ever forget a Friend, who tho' he be absent from us, is negotiating our Affairs, and is really absent for us. He is gone, but he is gone upon our Business, as the Forerunner he is for us entred: He is gone to appear in the presence of God for us, as our Advocate, is gone to prepare a place for us, as our Agent. May we be unmindful of him who is always mind-

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ful of us, and who as the Great High-Priest of our Profession, bears the Names of all his Spiritual Israel in his Breast-plate, near his Heart, within the Veil?

Ought we not to remember, and can we ever forget a Friend, who tho' he be now absent, will be absent but a while? We see him not, but we expect to fee him shortly, when he will come in the Clouds, and every Eye shall see him, will come to receive us to himself to share in his Joy and Glory. Shall we not be glad of any thing that helps us to remember him, who not only remembred us once in our low estate, but, having once remembered us, will never forget us? Shall not his Name be written in indelible Characters upon the Tables of our Heart, who hath Graven us upon the Palms of his Hands? Surely we must continually remember our Judge and Lord, when behold, The Lord is at Hand, and the Judge standeth before the Door. must we shew him forth till he come, for he comes quickly.

2. We are to do this in remembrance of the Death of Christ, as an Ancient Favour done us. This Ordinance was inffituted in the Night wherein our Master was berray'd (that Night of Observations as the First Passover-Night is call'd Exod. 12. 42. Masy) which intimateth the special reference this Ordinance was to have to that which was done that Night and the Day following. In it we are to know Christ and him Crucified, I Cor. 2. 2. and to remember his Sufferings, to remember his Bonds in All the Saints and all the a special manner. Churches could not see Christ upon the Cross, therefore in this Ordinance that great Transaction is fer before us, upon which the Judgment of this World turn'd. Joh. 12. 31. Now is the Judgment of

this World.

Here we remember the Dying of the Lord Jesus, that is,

(1.) We endeavour to preserve the Memory of it in the Church, and to transmit it pure and intire through our Age, to the Children which thall be created; that the Remembrance of it may be ever fresh, and may not dy in our Hands. That good thing which was committed to us, as a Trust, we must thus carefully keep, and faithfully deliver down to the next Generation; evidencing that we firmly believe, and frequently think of Christ's dying for us, and desiring that those who shall come

after us may do fo. too.

(2.) We endeavour to revive and excite the Remembrance of it in our own Hearts. The Ordinance was intended to stir up our pure Minds (our impure Minds we have too much reason to call them) by may of Remembrance, as the Expression is, 2 Pet, 3.1. That giving so earnest a Heed to the things that belong to the great Salvation, as the Solemnity of this Ordinance calls for, we may not at any time let them slip, or if we do, we may inthe use thereof speedily recover them, Heb. 2.1, 3. The instituted Images of Christ crucified, are in this Ordinance very strong and lively, and proper to make deep Impressions of his Grace and Love upon the Minds that are prepared to receive them, and such as cannot be worn out.

We see then what we have to do in our Attendance upon this Ordinance; we must remember the Sufferings of Christ there, else we do nothing.

1. This supposeth some Acquaintance with Christ crucified; for we cannot be said to remember that which we never knew. The Ignorant therefore to whom the great things of the Gospel are as a strange thing, which they are not concern'd to

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quaint themselves with, cannot answer the Intention of this Ordinance; but they offer the Blind for Sacrifice, not discerning the Lord's Body, and the Breaking of it. It concerns us therefore to cry after this Knowledge, and to labour after a clearer Insight into the Mystery of our Redemption by the Death of Christ; for if we be ignorant of this, and rest in false and consused Notions of it, we are unworthy to wear the Christian Name, and to live in a Christian Nation.

2. It implies a serious Thought and Contemplation of the Susserings of Christ, such as is sed and supplied with matter to work upon, not from a strong Fancy, but from a strong Faith. Natural Passions may be raised by the Power of Imagination, representing the Story of Christ's Susserings as very doleful and tragical, but Pious and Devout Affections are best kindled by the Consideration of Christ's Dying as a Propitiation for our Sins, and the Saviour of our Souls, and this is the Object of Faith, not of Fancy. We must here look unto Fesus as he is listed up in the Gospel, take him as the Word makes him, and so behold him.

3. This Contemplation of the Sufferings of Christ must make such an Impression upon the Soul, as to work it into a Fellowship with, and Conformity to Christ in his Susserings. This was the Knowledge and Remembrance of Christ which Blessed Paul was ambitious of, to Know Christ and the Fellowship of his Sufferings, Phil. 3. 10. and we all by our Baptism are in profession planted together in the likeness of his Death, Rom. 6.5. Then we do this in remembrance of Christ effectually, when we experience the death of Christ killing Sin in us, mortifying the Flesh, weaning us from this present Life, weakning vicious Habits and Dispositions in us, and the Power of Christ's Cross, both as a Moral Argument, and as the Spring of special Grace.

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Gal. 6. 14. When in touching the Hem of his Garment, we find (like that good Woman, Mark. 5. 27.) Virtue comes out of him to heal our Souls, then we rightly remember Christ crucified.

Secondly, It is a Confessing Ordinance. If the Heart believe unto righteousness, hereby confession is made unto salvation, Rom. 10.10. The Lord's Supper is one of the Peculiarities of our Holy Religion, by the Observance of which, the Professors of it are diftinguish'd from allothers. Circumcision, which was the initiating Ordinance among the Jews, by leaving its Mark in the Flesh, was a lasting Badge of Distinction; Baptism which succeeds it, leaves no fuch indelible Character in the Body : But the Lord's Supper is a Solemnity by which we constantly avow the Christian Name, and declare our felves not ashamed of the Banner of the Cross, under which we were lifted, but refolv'd to continue Christ's faithful Servant and Souldiers to our lives end, according to our Baptismal Vow.

In the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper we are faid to shew the Lord's Death, I Cor. 11.26. that is,

I. We hereby profess our Value and Esteem for Christ crucified. Kalasyén éle, ye shew it forth with Commendation and Praise, so the word sometimes fignifies. The Cross of Christ was to the Jews a stumbling Block, because they expected a Messiah in temporal Pomp and Power. 'Twas to the Greeks Foolishness, because the Doctrine of Man's Justification and Salvation by it was not agreeable to their Philosophy: The Wisdom of this World and the Princes of it, judg'd itabsurd to expect Salvation by one that dy'd a Captive, and Honour by one that died in disgrace; and turn'd it to the Reproach of Christians, that they were the Disciples and Fol-

Followers of one that was bang'd upon a Tree at Ferusalem. They who put him to such an ignominious Death, and loaded him with all the Shame they could put upon him, hoped thereby to make every one thy of owning him, or expressing any respect for him: But the Wisdom of God so order'd it, that the Cross of Christ is that which above any thing else Christians have cause to Glory in, Gal. 6. 14. Such are the Fruits, the Purchases, the Victories, the Triumphs of the Cross that we have reason to call it our Crown of Glory, and Diadem of Beauty. The Politicians thought it had been the Interest of Christ's Followers to have conceal'd their Lord's Death, and that they should have endeavour'd to bury it in Forgetfulness, but instead of that they are appointed to shew forth their Lord's Death, and to keep it in everlasting Remembrance before Angels and Men.

This then we mean when we receive the Lord's Supper; we thereby folemnly declare that we do not reckon the Cross of Christ any reproach to Christianity, and that we are so far from being asham'd of it, that whatever Constructions an unthinking unbelieving World may put upon it, to us it is the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God; its all our Salvation, and all our Desire. We think neverthe worse of Christ's Holy Religion for the ignominious Death of its great Author; for we see God in it glorified, Man by it saved; Then is the Offence of the Cross ceased; Then is the Reproach of it roll'd

away for ever.

2. We hereby profess our Dependance upon, and Confidence in Christ crucified. As we are not assam'd to own him, so we are not assam'd to venture our Souls and their Eternal Salvation with him, believing him able to save to the uttermest all that come to God by him, and as willing as he is able, and making Confession of that Faith. By this So-

Solemn Rite we deliberately and of choice put our selves under the Protection of his Righteousness, the Influence of his Grace, and the Conduct and Operation of his Holy Spirit. The Concerns that ly between us and God are of vast consequence, our Eternal Weal or Wo depends upon the right Management of them; now hereby we folemnly declare, that having laid them near our own Hearts in a serious care about them, we chuse to lodge them in the Redeemer's Hands by a judicious Faith in him, which we can give a good Reason for. God having declar'd himself well pleased in him, we hereby declare our selves well pleased in him too; God having committed all Judgment to the Son, we hereby commit all our Judgment to him likewise, as the sole Referee of the Great Cause, and the sole Trustee of the Great Concern, knowing whom we have believed, even one who is able and faithful to keep what we have committed to him against that day, that great day when it will be call'd for, 2 Tim. I. 11.

This then we mean when we receive the Lord's Supper; we confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we own our selves to be his Subjects, and put our selves under his Government; we Confess that he is a skilful Physician, and own our selves to be his Patients, resolving to observe his Prescriptions; we confess that he is a faithful Advocate, and own our selves to be his Clients, resolving to be advis'd by him in every thing. In a word, in this Ordinance we profess that we are not asham'd of the Gospel of Christ, nor of the Cross of Christ, in which his Gospel is all sum'd up, knowing it to be the Power of God unto Salvation, to all them that believe, Rom. 1. 16. and having found it so to us.

Thirdly, It is a Communicating Ordinance: Here are not only Gospel Truths represented to us, and

confessed by us, but Gospel Benefits offered to us, and acepted by us: For it is not only a Faithful Saying, but well worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus died to save Sinners, 1 Tim. 1.15. This is the Explication which the Apostle gives of this Ordinance, I Cor. 1c. 16. The Cup of Bleffing which we blefs, that is, which we pray to God to blefs, which we bless God with and for, and in which we hope and expect that God will bless us, it is the Communion (Kowavia, the Communication) of the Blood of Christ; the Bread which we break is the Communion, or, Communication, of the Body of Christ, which was not only broken for us upon the Cross, when it was made an Offering for Sin, but is broken to us, as the Childrens Bread is broken to the Children, in the Everlasting Gospel, wherein

it is made the Food of Souls.

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By the Body and Blood of Christ, which this Ordinance is the Communion of, we are to understand all those precious Benefits and Priviledges which were purchased for us by the Death of Christ, and are affur'd to us upon Gospel Terms in the Everlasting Covenant. When the Sun is said to be with us, and we say we have the Sun, as in the Day, as in the Summer, it is not the Body and Bulk of the Sun that we have, but his Raies and Beams are darted down upon us, and by them we receive the Light, Warmth, and Influence of the Sun, and thus the Sun is communicated to us, according to the Law of Creation; so in this Ordinance we are Partakers of Christ, (Heb. 3. 14.) not of his real Body and Blood; 'tis fenfeless and absurd, unchristian and inhumane to imagine so, but of his Merit and Righteousness for our Justification, his Spirit and Grace for our Sanctification. We must not dream of ascending up into Heaven, or of going down to the Deep, to fetch Christ into this Ordinance, that we may partake of him; no, the Word is nigh thee, and Christ in

the Word, Rom. 10. 6, 7, 8.

Unworthy Receivers, that is, those who resolves to continue in Sin, because Grace hath abounded, partake of the Guilt of Christ's Body and Blood, and have Communion with those that Crucified him, for as much as in them lies they erucify him afresh, Heb. 6. 6. Where they do speak such ill thoughts of Christ, that we may conclude if they had been at Jerusalem when he was put to death, they would have join'd with those that cried, Crucify him, crucify him.

But humble and penitent Believers partake of the bleffed Fruits of Christ's death; His Body and Blood are their Food, their Physick, their Cordial, their Life, their all. All the Riches of the Gospel

are virtually in them.

1. Christ and all his Benefits are here communicated to us: Here is not only Bread and Wine set before us to be look'd at, but given to us to be eaten and drunk; not only Christ made known to us that we may contemplate the Misteries of Redemption, but Christ made over to us, that we may participate of the Benefits of Redemption. God in this Ordinance not even assures us of the Truth of the Promise, but according to our present Case and Capacity, conveys to us by his Spirit the good things promised; Receive Christ Jesus the Lord, Christ and a Pardon, Christ and Peace, Christ and Grace, Christ and Heaven; 'tis all your own if you come up to the Terms on which it is offer'd in the Gospel.

Fountains of Life are here broken up, Wells of Salvation are here opened, the Stone roll'd away from the Well's Mouth, and you are call'd upon to come and draw Water with Joy: The Well is deep, but this Ordinance is a Bucket by which it is eafy

to draw; let not us for lake these Living-Streams for Puddle-Water. Breasts of Consolations are here drawn out to us, from which we may suck and be satisfied. These are Wisdom's Gates, where we are appointed to wait for Wisdom's Gifts, and we shall not wait in vain.

2. Christ and all his Benefits are here to be received by us. If we do indeed answer the Intention of the Ordinance, in receiving the Bread and Wine we accept the Offer that is made us; Lord I take thee at thy Word; be it unto thy Servant according to it. We hereby interest our selves in Christ's Mediation between God and Man, and take the Benesit of it according to the Tenor of the Everlasting Gospel. Christ in this Ordinance graciously condescending to shew us the Print of the Nails, and the Mark of the Spear, to shew us his pierced Hands, his pierced Side, those Tokens of his Love and Power as Redeemer, we by partaking of it comply with his Intentions, we consent to him, and close with him, saying as Thomas did, 30h. 20, 28. My Lord and my God. None but Christ.

none but Christ.

We do here likewise set our selves to participate of that Spiritual Strength and Comfort, which thro' Grace slows into the Hearts of Believers from their Interest in Christ crucified. The Gospel of Christ here solemnly exhibited, is Meat and Drink to our Souls, 'tis Bread that strengthens Man's Heart, and is the Staff of Life; 'tis Wine that makes glad the Heart, and revives the Spirits. Our Spiritual Life is supported and maintain'd, and the New Man enabled for its Work and Conslicts, by the Spiritual Benefits which here we communicate of, as the Natural Life, and the Natural Body is by our necessary Food. From the Fulness that is in Christ crucified, we here derive Grace for Grace, Grace for gracious Exercises, as the Branches derive Sap

from the Root, and as the Lamps derive Oil from the Olive-Trees, (Zech. 4. 11, 12. 3oh. 1. 16.) and so like healthful growing Children, are nourished up in the words of Faith and of good Dostrine, (1 Tim. 4.6.) till we all come to the perfect man, to the measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ. Thus it is our Communion with, and Communicating of Christ's Body and Blood.

our Saviour tells us, (that is, this Ordinance) is the New Testament, Luke 22. 20. not only pertaining to the New Testament, but containing it; it hath the whole New Testament in it, and is the Sum and Substance of it. The word substance is general, it is an Instrument by which a Right passeth, and is convey'd, and a Title to some good thing given. The Gospel Revelation of God's Grace and Will, is both a Testament and a Covenant, and the Lord's Supper thath a Reference to it as both.

1. It is the New Testament. The Everlasting Gospel is Christ's last Will, by which he hath given and bequeathed a great Estate to his Family on Earth, with certain Precepts and Injunctions, and under certain Proviso's and Limitations. Will is become of Force by the Death of the Testator, Heb. 9. 16, 17. and is now unalterable: It is prov'd in the Court of Heaven, and Administration given to the Bleffed Spirit, who is as the Executor of the Will, for of him the Testator said, Joh. 16. 14 He shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you. Christ having purchased a great Estate by the Merit of his Death, by his Testament he left it all to his poor Relations, that had need enough of it, and for whom he bought it; fo that all those who can prove themselves akin to Christ by their being born from above, (7oh. 3.3.) their partaking

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of a Divine Nature, (2 Pet. 1. 4.) and their doing the Will of God, (Mat. 12. 50.) may claim the Estate by virtue of the Will, and shall be sure of a present Maintenance, and a suture Inheritance out of it.

The Lord's Supper is this New Testament, it is not only the Memorial of the Testator's Death, but it is the Seal of the Testament. A true Copy of it, attested by this Seal, and pleadable, is hereby given into the Hands of every Believer, that he may have strong Consolation. The general Record of the New Testament, which is common to all, is hereby made particular.

(1.) The Charge given by the Will is hereby applied and enforced to us. The Testator hath charged us to remember him, hath charg'd us to follow him whithersoever he goes: He hath charged us to love one another, Joh. 13.34. and the Estate he hath left us is fo devis'd as not to give any occasion to quarrel, but rather to be a Bond of Union. He hath charg'd us to Espouse his Cause, serve his Interest, and concern our selves in his Concernments in the World, to feek the Welfare of the great Body, and all the Members of it. He hath likewife charg'd us to expect and prepare for his fecond coming: His Word of Command is Watch. Now in the Lord's Supper we are minded of this Charge, and bound afresh faithfully to observe whatsoever Christ hath commanded, as the Rechabites kept the Command of their Father, Jer. 35. 6, 8.

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particularly configned to us; paid in part, and the rest secured to be paid when we come to age, even at the time appointed by the Testator. What is lest for us is not only sufficient to answer the full Intention of the Will, enough for all, enough for each, but it is lest in good Hands, in the Hands of

the Spirit of Truth, who will not deal unfaithfully with us, for (as Christ tells us, John 14. 17.) We know him. Nay, Christ himself is risen from the Dead to be the Overseer of his own Will, and to see it duly executed, so that we are in no danger of loosing our Legacies, unless by our own default. These are good Securities, and what we may with abundant Satisfaction rely upon; and yet our Lord Jesus more abundantly to shew to the Heirs of Promise the Immutability of his Counsel, hath consirmed it by an Oath (by a Sacrament, which is his Oath to us as well as ours to him) that by all those immutable things in which it is impossible for God to by we might have strong Consolation, that have ventur'd our all in the New Testament, Heb. 6. 17, 18.

2. It is the New Covenant --- Though God is our Soveraign Lord and Owner, and we are in his Hand as the Clay in the Hand of the Potter, yet he condescends to deal with us about our Reconciliation and Happiness in the way of a Covenant, that they which are faved may be the more comforted, and they which perish may be rendred the more inexculable. The Tenor of this Covenant is. Act. 16. 31. Believe in the Lord Fefus Chrift and thou shalt be faved. Salvation is the great Promise of the Covenant, Believing in Christ the great Condition of the Covenant: Now this Cup is the Covenant, that is, it is the Seal of the Covenant. There feems to be an Allusion to that Solemnity, which we read of, Exod. 24. 7, 8. where Mojes read the Book of the Covenant in the Audience of the People. and the People declar'd their Confent to it, faying, All that the Lord hath said we will do, and will be obedient; and then Moses took the Blood and sprinkled it upon the People, part of it having before been fprinkled upon the Altar, and Said, Behold the Blood of the Covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning

ing all these Words. Thus the Covenant being made by Sacrifice, (Pfal. 50. 5.) and the Blood of the Sacrifice being sprinkled both upon the Altar of God, and upon the Representatives of the People, both Parties did as it were interchangeably put their Hands and Seals to the Articles of Agreement. So the Blood of Christ having satisfied for the Breach of the Covenant of Innocency, and purchas'd a new Treaty, and being the Sacrifice by which the Covenant is made, is fitly call'd the Blood of the Covenant, Having sprinkled this Blood upon the Altar in his Intercession, when by his own Blood he enter'd in once into the Holy Place, he doth in this Sacrament sprinkle it upon the People; as the Apoftle explains this Mystery, Heb. 9. 12. --- 20. A Bargain is a Bargain tho' it be not feal'd, but the Sealing is the Ratification and Perfection of it. The Internal Seal of the Covenant as administred to true Believers, is the Spirit of Promise, Eph. 1.12. whereby we are fealed to the Day of Redemption, Eph. 4. 30. But the External Seals of the Covenant, as administred in the visible Church, are the Sacraments, particularly this of the Lord's Supper. Sealing Ordinances are appointed to make our Covenanting with God the more folemn, and confequently the more affecting, and the Impressions of it the more abiding. The Covenant of Grace is a Covenant never to be forgotten, (Jer. 50. 5.) This Ordinance therefore was instituted to assure us. that God never will forget it, and to affift us that we never may forget it. It is the Seal of the New. Covenant, that is,

(1.) God doth in and by this Ordinance feal to us to be to us a God. This Article of the Covenant is inclusive of all the rest, in giving himself to us to be ours, he gives us all things, for he is God All-sufficient. This is the Grant, the Royal C 2

Grant which the Eternal God here feals and delivers to true Believers as his Act and Deed. He gives himself to them, and empowers them to call him theirs. What God is in himself, he will be to them for their good. His Wisdom theirs, to counsel and direct them; his Power theirs, to prorect and support them; his suffice theirs, to justify them; his Holiness theirs, to fanctify them; his Goodness theirs, to love and supply them: his Truth is the inviolable Security of the Promise; and his Eternity the Perpetuity of their Happiness. He will be to them a Father, and they shall be his Sons and Daughters, dignified by the Privileges of Adoption, and diftinguish'd by the Spirit of Adoption. Their Maker is their Husband, and he hath faid that he is married to them, and rejoiceth in them as the Bridegroom in his Bride, Ifa. 62. 4, 5. The Lord is their Shepherd, and the Sheep of his Pasture shall not want. He is the Portion of their Inheritance in the other World, as well as of their. Cup in this, hath prepared for them a City, and therefore is not ashamed to be call'd their God, Heb. 11.16. compare Luk. 20, 37.

(2.) We do in and by this Ordinance feal to him to be to him a People. We accept the Relation by our voluntary choice and consent, and bind our some with a Bond, that we will approve our selves to him in the Relation. We hereby resign, surrender, and give up our whole selves, Body, Soul, and Spirit, to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, covenanting and promising that we will by his strength serve him faithfully, and walk closely with him in all manner of Gospel Obedience, allour Days. Claiming the Blessings of the Covenant, we put our selves under the Bonds of the Covenant. O Lord truly I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant; wholly, and only, and for ever thine.

And this is the Meaning of this Service.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

An Invitation to this Ordinance.

Plentiful and suitable Provision is made in this Ordinance out of the Treasures of the Redeemer's Grace; and Ministers, as Servants, are sent to bid to the Feast; to invite those that the Master of the Feast hath design'd for his Guests, and to hasten those that are invited to this Banquet of Wine, alluding to Esth. 6. 14. Wisdom hath sent forth ber Maidens on this Errand, and they have Words put in their Mouths, Luk. 14. 17. Come, for all things are now ready: This is our Message.

First, We are to tell you that all things are ready, now ready: He that bath an Ear, let him hear this. All things are now ready in the Gospel Feast, that are proper for, or will contribute to the full Satisfaction of an immortal Soul, that knows its own Nature and Interest, and desires to be truly and eternally happy in the Love and Favour of its Creator.

1. All things are ready; all things requisite to a Noble Feast. Let us a little improve the Metaphor.

(1.) There is a House ready for the Entertainment of the Guests, the Gospel Church, Wisdom's House which she hath built upon seven Pillars, Prov. 9. 1. God hath set up his Tabernacle among Men, and the Place of this Tent is enlarged, and made capacious enough, so that the Table has been

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32 An Invitation to the Lord's Supper.

replenished with Guests, yet still there is room,

Luk. 14. 22.

(2.) There is a Table ready spread in the Word and Ordinances, like the Table in the Temple on which the Shew-bread was placed, a Loaf for every Tribe. The Scripture is written, the Canon of it compleated, and in it a full Declaration made of God's good Will towards Men, which he

that runs may read.

(3.) There is a Laver ready for us to wash in; as at the Marriage Feast in Cana, there were six Waterpots fet for Purisication, John 2. 6. lest Sense of Pollutions contracted should deter us from the Participation of these Comforts, Behold there is a Fountain open'd, Zech. 13. 1. Come and wash in it, that being purged from an Evil Conscience by the Blood of Jesus, you may with humble Considence compass God's Altar.

(4.) There are Servants ready to attend you, and those are the Ministers, whose Work it is to direct you to the Table, and to give to every one their portion of meat in due Season, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. They are not Masters of the Feast, but only Stewards, and your Servants for Christ's sake,

2 Cor. 4. 5.

(5.) There's a deal of Company already come, many have accepted the Invitation, and have found a hearty Welcome, Why then should your Place be empty? Let the Communion of Saints invite you

into Communion with Christ.

(6.) A Bleffing is ready to be crav'd. He is ready that is to blefs the Sacrifice, (I Sam. 9. 13.) The great High-Priest of our Profession, ever living to intercede for us, and attending continually to this very thing, is ready to command a Bleffing upon our spiritual Food.

(7.) The Master of the Feast is ready to bid you welcome, as ready as the Father of the Prodigal

was to receive his repenting returning Son, whom he saw when he was yet a great way off, Luk. 15.20. God's Ear is open to bear, his Hand open to give,

Ma. 65. 24.

(8.) The Provision is ready for your Entertainment. Allthings are ready. 1: For our Justification; Divine luftice is satisfied, an Everlasting Righteonsness is brought in; an Act of Indemnity hath passed the Royal Affent, and a Pardon-Office is erected, where all that can make it appear they are interested in the General Act, may sue out their particular Charter of Pardon. There's a Plea ready, an Advocate ready, Behold he is near that justifieth us, Ifa. 50. 8. 2. For our Sandification; there is a fulness of Grace in Christ, from which we may all receive. The Word of Grace is ready as the Means, the Spirit of Grace is ready as the Author: Every thing ready for the mortifying of Sin, the confirming of Faith, and our Furtherance in Holiness. 2. For our Consolations: A Well of Living-water is ready if we can but see it: Peace is lest us for a Legacy, which we may claim if we will; Promifes are given us for our support, which if we have not the Benefit of, it's our own fault. There is fomething in the New Covenant to obviate every Grief, every Challenge, every Fear, if we will afe it. 4. For our Salvation, ready to be reveal'd. 1 Pet: 1. 5. Angels upon the Wing are ready to convoy us ; Jefus standing at the Father's Right-hand is ready to receive us; the many Mansions are ready prepar'd for us. All things are ready.

2. All things are now ready, just now, for be-

hold, Now is the accepted time, 2 Cor. 6. 2.

(1.) All things are now readier than they were, under the Law. Grace then lay more hid than it doth now, when Life and Immortality are brought to so clear a light by the Gospel. Christ in a Sacrament ... 34 An Invitation to the Lord's Supper.

erament is much readier than Christ in a Sacri-

fice:

(2.) All things are now readier than they will be shortly, if we trifle away the present Season. Now the Door of Mercy stands open, and we are invited to come and enter, but it will shortly be shut. Now the Golden Sceptre is held out, and we are call'd to come and touch the top of it, but it will be otherwise when the Days of our Probation are number'd and finish'd, and he that now saith, Come for a Blessing, will say, Depart with a Curse.

Secondly, We must call you to come; this is now the Call, Come, Come: The Spirit saith Come, and the Bride saith Come, Rev. 22. 17. Come to Christ in the first place, and then come to this Ordinance.

All things are ready, be not you unready.

This Exhortation must be directed to three sorts of Persons. 1. Those who are interly unmeet for this Ordinance, must be exhorted to qualify themselves, and then come. 2. Those who through Grace are in some measure meet for this Ordinance, must be exhorted speedily to enter themselves.

3. Those who have entred themselves, must be exhorted to be constant in their Attendance upon it.

First, I must apply my self to those that by their Ignorance, Profaneness, Irreligion, or Reigning Worldliness, puta Bar in their own way, and may not be admitted to this Ordinance. If these Lines should fall under the Eye of any such, let them know I have a Message to them from God, and I must deliver it, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

Dost thou live a carnal wicked Life in the Service of Sin and Satan, without Fear, and without God in the World? Light is come into the World, and dost thou love Darkness rather, not knowing, nor

desiring to know the Way of the Lord, and the Judgment of thy God? Art thou a Drunkard, a Swearer, a Sabbath-breaker? Art thou an Adulterer, Fornicator, or Unclean Person? Art thou a Liar, a Deceiver, a Railer, or a Contentious Person? Art thou a meer Drudge to the World, or a Slave to any base Lust? Doth thy own Conscience tell thee, Thou art the Man, or would it not tell thee fo if thou would'ft fuffer it to deal faithfully with thee?

1. Know then, That thou hast no part nor lot in this matter; while thou continuest thus, thou art not an invited Guest to this Feast, the Servants dare not bid thee welcome, for they know the Master will not, but will ask thee, Friend, bow camest thou in hither? What hast thou to do to take God's Covenant, and the Seal of it into the Mouth, feeing thou hatest Instruction? Read that Scripture, and hear God speaking to thee in it, Pfal. 50. 16. &c. It is not meet to take the Children's Bread and caft it to D.gs. Thou are forbidden to touch these facred things with thine unhollowed Hands; for What Communion bath Christ with Belial ? If thou thrust thy self upon this Ordinance while thou continuest under fuch a Character, instead of doing Honour to the Lord Jefus, thou put'ft a daring Affront upon him, as if he were altogether such a one as thy felf: Inflead of fetching in any true comfort to thine own Soul, thou dolf but aggravate thy Guilt and Condemnation; thy Heart will be more hardened, thy Conscience more sear'd. Saran's Strong-holds more fortified, and thou eatest and drinkest Judgment to thy felf, not discerning the Lord's Body, not putting a Difference between this Bread and other Bread; but trampling under Foot the Blood of the Covenant, as a profane and common thing. 2. Knew

2. Know also, That thy Condition is very miserable while thou debarrest thy felf from this Ordinance, and art as polluted put from this Priesthood. How light foever thou may'st make of it, this is not of thy Whordoms, this is not of thy Miseries a small matter, that thou shuttest thy self out of Covenant and Communion with the God that made thee, & in effect disclaimeth any Interest in the Christ that bought thee, as if thou had'st taken the Devil's Words out of their Mouth, What have we to do with the Jesus thou Son of God? and if thou persist in it, so shall thy Doom be, thou thy felf has decided it. If now it be as nothing to thee to be separated from the Sheep of Christ, and excluded from their Green Pastures, yet it will be something shortly, when thou shalt accordingly have thy place among the Goats, and thy lot with them for ever. think'ft it no loss now to want the Cup of Bleffing, because thou preferrest the Cup of Drunkenness before it; But what dost thou think of the Cup of Trembling, that will e're long be put into thy Hand if thou repent not? Thou hast no desire to the Wine of the Love of God, but chusest the Puddle-Water of sensual Pleasures rather, but can'st thou drink of the Wine of the Wrath of God, which shall be pour'd out without mixture, in the presence of the: Lamb? Rev. 14. 10. Thou think'st thy felf easy and happy that thou art not under the Bonds and Checks of this Ordinance; but do'ft thou not fee thy felf extreamly miserable while thou hast no Right to the Bleffings and Comforts of this Ordinance? If there were not another Life after this, thou might'st have some colour for Bleffing thy self thus in thine own wicked way (and yet if fo, I should see no cause to envy thee) but wretched Soul, What wilt thou do in the Day of Visitation? Thou that herdest thy felf with the Sinners in Zion, and chusest them for thy People, Canst thou dwell with. with devouring fire? canst thou inhabit everlasting burnings? Isa. 33. 14. God by his Grace open thine Eyes, and give thee to see thy Misery and Dan-

ger before it be too late.

3. Yetknow, That the thy Condition is very sad, it is not desperate. Thou hast yet space given thee to repent, and Grace offer'd thee; O refuse not that Grace, slip not that space. Leave thy Sins, and turn to God in Christ; cast away from thee all thy Transgressions, make thee a new Heart, begin a new Life, for sake the Foolish, and Live, live to some purpose, and go in the Way of Understanding, and then in Wisdom's Name I am to tell thee, that notwithstanding all thy former Follies, thou art welcome to her House, welcome to her Table, freely welcome to eat of her Bread, and to drink of the Wine which she bath mingled, Prov. 9. 4, 5, 6. Now at least, now at last in this thy Day, Know the things that belong to thy Peace; Be wise for thy self, wise for thine own Soul, and cheat not thy self into thine own Ruin.

Poor Sinner! I pity thee, I would gladly help thee; the Lord pity thee, and help thee! He will if thou wilt pity thy felf, and help thy felf. Wilt thou be perswaded by one that wishes thee well to exchange the Service of Sin, which is perfect Slavery, for the Service of God, which is perfect Liberty? to exchange the base and fordid Pleasures of a Sensual Life, which level thee with the Beasts, for the pure and refined Pleasures of a Spiritual and Divine Life, which will raise thee to a Communion with the Holy Angels? I am confident thou wilt quickly find it a blessed Change, Awake, Shake thy self from the Dust, loose thy self from the Bands of thy Neck, Isa. 52.2. Give up thy self in sincerity to Jesus Christ, and then come and feast with him; thou shalt then have in this Ordinance the Pledges of his Favour, Assurances

of thy Reconciliation to him, and Acceptance with him, and all shall be well, for it shall end everlastingly well.

Secondly. I must next apply my self to those who having competent Knowledge in the things of God. and making a justifiable Profession of Christ's Holy Religion, cannot be denied Admission to this Ordinance, and yet deny themselves the Benefit and Comfort of it. Such are hereby exhorted without further delay, folemnly to give up their Names to the Lord Jelus in and by this Sacrament. Hear Hezekiah's Summonstothe Paffover, 2 Chron. 20. 8. Tield your selves unto the Lord, Give the Hand unto the Lord; so the Hebrew Phraseis; join your selves to him in the Bond of the Covenant, and then to exchange the Ratifications, enter into the Sanctuary. First give your own selves unto the Lord, and then confirm the Surrender by the Solemnity of this Ordinance.

1. Let me address this Exhortation to young People that were in their Infancy baptiz'd into the Christian Faith, and have been well educated in the Knowledge of God, and of his Ways, and are now grown up to Years of Discretion, are capable of understanding what they do, of discerning between their Right-hand and their Left in Spiritual things. and of chuling and refuling for themselves accordingly; and that have had some good Impressions made upon their Souls by Divine Things, and fome good Inclinations towards God, and Christ, and Heaven; fuch are invited to the Table of the Lord, and call'd upon to come, for all things are now

ready, and it is not good to delay.

You that are young, will you now be prevail'd with to be ferious, and refoled for God? You now begin to act with reason, and to put away childish things; you are cometo be capable of Con-

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fidering, and you are thinking how you must live in this World; O that I could prevail with you to think first how you may live for another World! I am not perswading you to come rashly and carelefly to the Lord's Table, as when you were little Children you went to Church for Fashion's sake. and because your Parents took you with them: But I am perfivading you now in the Days of your Touth, from a deep Conviction of your Duty and Interest, and a serious Concern about your Souls and Eremity, intelligently, deliberately, and with a fixed Resolution to join your selves unto the Lord in an Everlasting Covenant, and then to come and feal that Covenant at his Table. You are now come to the turning time of Life, to those Years when ordinarily People fix for their whole Lives; I beg of you for Christ's fake, and for your own precious Soul's fake, that now you will turn to God, and fix for him, and fer your Faces Heavenwards.

Come and let us reason together a little, and I

befeech you to reason with your selves.

I. Are you not by Baptism given up unto the Lord? Are not the Vows of God already upon you? Is not your Baptism your Honour? Is it not your Comfort? It is so; But you are unworthy of that Honour, unworthy of that Comfort, if when you arrive to a Capacity for it, you decline doing that for your selves which was done for you when you were baptiz'd. How can you expect that your Parents Dedication of you to God then, should avail you any thing if you do not now make it your own Act and Deed? Might not your backwardness to confirm the Covenant by this solemn taking of it upon your selves, be construed an implicit Renunciation of it, and be adjudg'd a Forseiture of the Benefit of it? I believe you would

not for a world disclaim your Baptism, nor disown the Obligation of it; you will not, I am confident you will not throw off your Christianity, nor join with those that say, We have no part in David, no Inheritance in the Son of David; come then and ratify your Baptism, either set those Articles be cancell'd, or now you are of Age, come and seal them your selves; either stand to the Bargain, or say you will not; either be Christians compleat, Christians by your own consent, or not Christians at all. The matter is plain; the Bonds of both the Sacraments are the same; you are under the Bonds of the one, which I know you dare not renounce, therefore come under the Bonds of the other: Con-

fider, take advice, and speak your Minds.

2. How can you dispose of your selves better now in the Days of your Youth, than to give up your felves unto the Lord? Thefe are your Chufing Days; you are now thusing other Settlements, in Callings, Relations, and Places of Abode, why should you not now chuse this Settlement in the Service of God, which will make all your other Settlements comfortable? Chuse you therefore this Day whom you will ferve; God or the World, Christ or the Flesh; and be perswaded to bring the matter to a good iffue; determine the Debare in that happy Resolve which the People of Israel came to, when they faid. Nay but we will ferve the Lord, Josh. 24.21. Why should not he who is the First and the Best. have the First and the Best of your Days? which I am fure you cannot bestow better, and which it is both your Duty and Interest to bestow thus.

3. What will you get by delaying it? You intend fome time or other folemnly to give up your felves unto the Lord in this Ordinance, and you hope then to receive the Benefit and Comfort of it, but the Tempter tells you, it's all in good time, and you dismiss your Convictions as Felix did

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An Invitation to the Lord's Supper.

Paul. Att. 24. 25. with a Promise, that at a more convenient Season you will send for them. You are ready to say as the People did, Hag. 1. 2. The time is not come, the time that the Lord's House should be built; you think you must build your own first, and what comes of those Delays? Satan e're you aware gets advantage by them, and cozens you of all your time, by cozening you of the present time; your Hearts are in danger of being hardned, the Spirit of Grace may hereby be provoked to withdraw, and strive no more; and what will become of you if Death surprize you before your great Work be done?

4. What better Provision can you make for a comfortable Life in this World than by doing this great Work betimes? You are fetting out in a World of Temptations, more than you think of; and how can you better arm your selves against them than by coming up to that fixed Resolution which will filence the Tempter, with, Get thee behind me Satan. When Naomi faw that Ruth was stedfastly resolv'd, The left off speaking to her. The Counsel of the Ungodly will not be so apt to court you to the Way of Sinners, and the Seat of the Scornful, when you have avow'd your felves fet out in the way of God, and feated already at the Table of the Lord. You are lanching forth into a stormy Sea, and this will furnish you with Ballast; your way lies thro a Vale of Tears, and therefore you have need to be well stock'd with Comforts; and where can you stock your felves better than in an Ordinance which feals all the Promises of the New Covenant, and conveys all the Happiness included in them.

And now shall I gain this Point with young People? will they be perswaded betimes to resolve for God and Heaven? Remember thy Creator, remember thy Redeemer in the Days of thy Touth, and then it is to be hop'd thou wilt not forget 42 An Invitation to the Lord's Supper. them, nor will they forget thee when thou are

2. Let me address this Exhortation to those whose Inclinations are good and their Conversations blameless, but their Desires are weak and their Affections cool and indifferent, and therefore they keep off from this Ordinance. This is the Character of very many, who are honest, but they want Zeal and Resolution enough to bring them under this Engagement. They can give no tolerable Reason why they do not come to the Sacrament; it may be they have bought a Piece of Ground, or a Toke of Oxen, their Hands are full of the World, and they are too buily, they are unfertled, or not fettled to their Minds, and this makes them uneasy, and they hope that therefore they may be excus'd; but the true Reason is, they are sorhful and delatory, and the things that remain are ready to dy; they cannot find in their Hearts to take pains, the Pains they know they must take in a Work of this Nature; they are not willing to be bound to that Strictness, Care, and Watchfulness which this Sacrament will oblige them to; they will be as they are, and make no Advances; they have bid their Hand in their Bosom, and it grieves them to bring it to their Mouth again, i. e. they will not be at the Pains to feed themselves, Prov. 26. 15.

What shall we say to rouze these Sluggards? to perswade them to press forwards in their Profession, forgetting the things that are behind, and not resting in them? Hear ye Virgins that Sumber and fleep, and let your Lamps ly by neglected, hear the Cry, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, cometh in this Ordinance to espouse you to himself, stir up your felves, and go ye forth to meet him. Hear ye Servants, ye flothful Servants, your Master's Voice, How long wilt thou sleep O sluggard? Is it not high time

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time to awake out of sleep, and apply thy self more closely and vigorously to the Business of a Christian? Is it not far in the Day with thee, perhaps the sixth Hour, or surther on, Dinner-time, and yet hast thou no apperite to this Spiritual Feast to which thou art invited? Thou hast lost a great deal of time already, should'st not thou now think of redeeming time for thy Soul and Eternity? and how can that be better done than by improving such advantageous Opportunities as Sacraments are? Hear that call to careless and trisling Professors, as if thou thy self wert called by name in it, Eph. 5.14: Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the Dead, and Christ shall give thee Light.

1. Confider what an Affront you put upon the Lord Jesus while you live in the neglect of this Ordinance: You contemn his Authority, who hath given this Command to all his Disciples, (and among them you reckon your felves). Do this in remembrance of me. And is it nothing to live in the Omission of a known Duty, and in disobedience ro an Express Precept? Is the Law of Christ nothing with you? If you know to do good and do it not, is it not Sin? Is not this as much an Ordinance of Christ as the Word and Prayer? You would not live without them, nor would you be your felves or fuffer your Children to be without Baptism? why then is this neglected? You arraign Christ's Wisdom; he instituted this Ordinance for your Spiritual Good, your strength and nourishment, and you think you need it not, you can do as well without it: This Appointment you think might have been spar'd, that is, you think your selves wiser than Christ. You likewise hereby pur a great flight upon the Grace and Love of Christ, which hath made such rich Provision for you, and given you so kind an Invitation to it. This.

44 An Invitation to the Lord's Supper.

This is excellently well urg'd in the Publick Form of Invitation to the Holy Communion, which warn'd those that are scandalous to keep off in these Words; "If any of you be a Blasphemer of God, a Hinderer or Slanderer of his Word, an Adulterer, or be in malice or envy, or in any other grievous "Crime; repent you of your Sins, or else come not to that Holy Table, lest after the taking of that Holy Sacrament, the Devil enter into you, as he entred into Judas, and fill you full of all Iniquities, and bring you to Destruction both of

" Body and Soul."

But in the other Exhortation stirs up those that are negligent in these Words: "Ye know how " grievous and unkind a thing it is, when a Man " hath prepared a rich Feaft, decked his Table " with all kind of Provision, so that there lacketh nothing but the Guests to fit down, and yet they who are called (without any Caufe) most unthankfully refuse to come: Which of you in " fuch a Case would not be moved? Who would " not think a great Injury and Wrong done unto " him? Wherefore most dearly Beloved in Christ, " take ye good heed lest ye withdrawing your " felves from this Holy Supper, provoke God's Indignation against you. It is an easy matter " for a Man to fay, I will not communicate because I am otherwise hinder'd with worldly Bu-" finess; but such Excuses are not so easily acecepted and allowed before God. If any Manfay " I am a grievous Sinner, and therefore am afraid to come; wherefore then do ye not repent and amend? When God calleth you, are ye not ashamed to say, ye will not come? When ye should return to God, will ye excuse your selves, and fay you are not ready? Confider earnestly with your felves, how little fuch feigned Excuses " will avail before God. They that refused the " Feast

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"Feast in the Gospel because they had bought a "Farm, or would try their Yokes of Oxen, or because they were married, were not so exceed, but counted unworthy of the Heavenly Feast.

2. Confider. What an Injury you hereby do to your own Souls. You know not what you lofe while you live in the neglect of this Ordinance. If you be depriv'd of Opportunities for it, that's an Affliction but not a Sin, and in such a Case while you lament the want of it, and keep up Defires after it, and improve the other Helps you have, you may expect that God will make up the Want some other way; tho' we are ty'd to Ordinances, God is not: But if you have Opportunities for it, and yet neglect it, and when it is to be administred, turn your Back upon it, you serve your Souls so as you would not serve your Bodies, for you deny them their necessary Food; and the Soul that is stary'd is as certainly murther'd as the Soul that is stab'd. and its Blood shall be requir'd at thy Hands. No Man ever yet hated his own Flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth is, yet thou deniest thine own Soul that which would nourish and cherish it, and thereby shewest how little thou lovest it. If thou didst duly attend on this Ordinance and improve it aright. thou would'ft find it of unspeakable use to thee for the strengthning of thy Faith, the exciting of Holy Affections in thee, and thy furtherance in every good Word and Work. So that to thy neglect of it, thou hast reason to impute all thy Weakness, and all the Strength and Prevalency of thy Temptations, all the Unsteddiness of thy Resolutions, and all the unevennels of thy Conversation. How can we expect the defired End while we perfift in the neglect of the appointed means?

Think not to fay within your felves, we are not clean, furely we are not clean, therefore we come not to the Feaft; if you are not, why are you not?

Isthere not a Fountain open'd? Have you not been many a time call'd to wash you and make you clean? You are unready, and therefore you excufe your felves from coming; but is not your unreadiness your Sin; and will one Sin justify you in another? Can a Man's Offence be his Defence? You think you are not ferious enough, nor devout enough, nor regular enough in your Conversations to come to the Sacrament; and perhaps you are not, but why are ye not? What hinders you? Is any more required to fit you for the Sacrament than is necessary to fit you for Heaven? And dare you live a day in that Condition, in which if you dy, you will be rejected and excluded as unmeet for Heaven? Be perswaded therefore to put on the Wedding-Garment, and then come to the Wedding-Feaft. Instead of making your Unreadiness an Argument against coming to this Ordinance, make the Necessity of your coming to this Ordinance an Argument against your Unreadiness. Say not I am too light and airy, too much addicted to fport and pleasures, am link'd too close in vain and carnal Company, or plung'd too deep in worldly Care and Business, and therefore I must be excus'd from attending this Ordinance, for this is to make M. worle: But fay rather, It is necessary I come to the Lord's Supper, and come in a right manner; my Soul withers and languishes, dies and perishes if I do not, and therefore I must break off this vain and sensual Course of Life, which unfirs me for, and indisposes me to that Ordinance; therefore I must disentangle my felf from that Society. and differgage my felf from that Encumbrance, whatever it is which cools pious Affections, and quenches that Cole. Shake off that, whatever it is, which comes between you, and the Comfort and Benefit of this Ordinance: Dally no longer in a matter of such vast Moment, but speedily come

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An Invitation to the Lord's Supper. 47

to that Resolution, Psal. 119. 115. Depart from me ye evil Doers, and evil Doings, for I will keep the

Commandments of my God.

3. Let me address this Exhortation to those whose Defires are strong towards the Lord, and towards the Remembrance of his Name in this Ordinance; but they are timorous, and are kept from it by prevailing Fears: This is the case of many who we hope fear the Lord and obey the Voice of his Servant, but they walk in darkness, and have no light, Ma. 50. 10. who follow Christ, but they follow him trembling. Ask them why they do not come to this Sacrament, and they'll tell you they dare not come, they are unworthy, they have no Faith, no Comfort in God, no Hope of Heaven, and therefore if they should come, they should eat and drink Judgment to themselves. They find not in them-selves that Fixedness of Thought, that Flame of pious and devout Affections which they think should be, and because they cannot come as they should, they think it better to stay away. What is faid for the Conviction and Terror of Hypocrite and presumptuous Sinners, notwithstanding our Care to distinguish between the precious and the vile? they misapply to themselves, and so the Heart of the Righteous is made sad, which should not be made We are commanded to strengthen the week Hands, and confirm the feeble Knees; to fay to them that are of a fearful Heart, Be strong, fear not, Isa. 35. 3, 4. But wherewith shall we comfort such, whose Souls many times resule to be comforted? If we tell them of the infinite Mercy and Goodness of God, the Merit and Righteousness of Christ, the precious Promises of the Covenant, their jealous Hearts reply, all this is nothing to them; the Lord they think has forfaken them, their God hath forgotten them, and utterly separated them from his People; As vinegar upon nitre,

48 An Invitation to the Lord's Supper.

fo is be that fingeth fongs to those heavy hearts, Prov.

25. 20.

But, O ye of little Faith, who thus doubt, would you not be made whole? would not you be strengthned? is it not a desireable thing to attain to such a Peace and Serenity of Mind, as that you may come with a humble Holy Boldness to this precious Ordinance?

For your help then, take these two Cautions.

1. Judge not amiss concerning your selves. As it is a damning Mistake common among the Children of Men to think their Spiritual State and Condition to be good, when it is very bad, for, There is that maketh himself rich, and yet hath nothing; so it is a disquieting Mistake, common among the Children of God, to think their Spiritual State and Condition to be bad, when it is very good, for there is that maketh himself poor, and yet hath great riches, Prov. 13. 7. But it is a Mistake, which I hope by the Grace of God may be rectified, and though a full Affurance is rarely attain'd to, and we ought always to keep up a Godly Jealoufy over our selves, and a Holy Fear, lest we seem to come short, yet such good Hope thro' Grace, as will enable us to rejoice in God, and go on chearfully in our Work and Duty, is what we should aim at, and labour after, and which we ought not to deny our selves the Comfort of, when God by his Grace hath given us Cause for it. Wherever there is fuch a ferious concern about the Soul and another World as produceth a Holy Fear, even that gives Ground for a lively Hope.

You think you have no Grace because you are not yet perfest; but why should you look for that on Earth, which is to be had in Heaven only? A Child will at length be a Man, tho as yet he

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An Invitation to the Lord's Supper. 49

think as a Child and speak as a Child. Blessed Paul himself had not yet attained, nor was already perfect, Phil. 2. 12. Gold in the Ore is truly valuable, the it be not yet refin'd from its Dross. Despise not the Day of small things, for God doth not, Zech. 4. 10. Deny not that Power and Grace which hath brought you out of the Land of Egypt, the you be not yet come to Canaan.

You think you have no Grace because you have not that sensible Joy and Comfort which you would have; but those are spiritually enlightned who see their own Deformity, as well as those that see Christ's Beauty. The Child that cries is as sure alive is the Child that laughs. Complaints of Spiritual Burthens are the Language of the New Nature as

well as Praises for Spiritual Bleffings.

Drooping Soul! Thou art under Grace and not under the Law, and therefore judge of thy felf by the measures of Grace, and not by those of the Law. Those hast to do with one that is willing to make the best of thee, and will accept the willingness of the Spirit, and pardon the Weakness of the Flesh. Take thy work before thee therefore, and let not the penitent humble Sense of thy own Follies and Corruptions eclipse the Evidence of God's Graces in thee, nor let thy Diffidence of thy felf shake thy Confidence in Christ. Thank God for what he has done for thee; let him have the Praise of it, and then thou shalt have the Joy of it. And this is certain, either thou hast an Interest in Christ or thou may'ft have. If thou doubt therefore whether Christ be thine, put the matter out of doubt by a present consent to him; I take Christ to be mine, wholly, only, and for ever mine; Christ upon be own terms, Christ upon any terms.

^{2.} Judge not amis concerning this ordinance. It was instituted for your Comfort, let it not be a

Terror to you; 'twas instituted for your Satisfaction, let it not be your Amuzement. Most of the Messages from Heaven which we meet with in Scripture, deliver'd by Angels, began with Fear not, and particularly that to the Women which attended Christ's Sepulchre, Mat. 28. 5. Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus; and do not you seek him? Be not asraid then. Chide your selves for, chide your selves out of these disquietting Fears, which steal away your Spear, and your Cruse of Water, (1 Sam. 26. 12.) rob you both of your strength, and of your Comfort.

You say you are unworthy to come; so were all that ever came, not worthy to be called Children, nor to eat of the Children's Bread: In your selves there is no Worthiness, but is there none in Christ? is not he worthy? and is not he yours? have not you chosen him? appear therefore before God in him. Let Faith in his Mediation silence all your Fears, and dismiss their Clamours with that, But

thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

You say you dare not come lest you should eat and drink Judgment to your selves; but ordinarily, those that most fear that, are least in danger of it. That dreadful Word was not intended to drive Men from the Sacrament, but to drive them from their Sins. Can you not say through Grace you have Sin, you strive against it, you earnestly desire to be deliver'd from it; then certainly your League with it is broken; tho' the Canaanites be in the Land you do not make Marriages with them; come then and seal the Covenant with God, and you shall be so far from eating and drinking Judgment to your selves, that you shall eat and drink Life and Comfort to your selves.

You dare not come to this Sacrament, yet you dare pray, you dare hear the Word, I know you dare not neglect either the one or the other, and

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what is this Sacrament but the doing the fame thing by a Visible Sign, which is and ought to be done in effect by the Word and Prayer; nor ought we to put fuch an amazing distance between this and other Ordinances. If we pray in Hypocrify our Prayers are an Abomination; If we hear the Word and reject it, 'tis a Savor of Death unto Death: shall we therefore not pray? not hear? God forbid. Commanded Duty must be done; appointed means must be us'd; that which disfits and hinders us must be remov'd, and we must in fincerity give up our felves to ferve God: do as well as we can, and be forry we can do no better, and then having a High-Priest which is touch'd with the feeling of our Infirmities, we may come boldly to the Throne of Grace, and to this Table of Grace.

You say your Faith is weak, your pious Affections are cool and low, your Resolutions unsteddy. and therefore you keep away from this Ordinance; that's as if a Man should say he is fick, and therefore he will take no Physick; he is empty and therefore he'll take no Food; he's faint and therefore he'll take no Cordials: This Ordinance was appointed chiefly for the Relief of such as you are; for the strengthning of Faith, the enslaming of Holy Love, and the confirming of good Resolutions: In God's Name therefore use it for those Purposes; pine not away in thy Weakness while God has ordained thee Strength: Perish not for hunger, while there's Bread enough in thy Father's House, and to spare; dy not for thirst while there is a Well of

Water by thee.

Thirdly, This Chapter must conclude with an Exhortation to those that have given up their Names to the Lord in this Ordinance, and have sometimes feal'd their Covenant with God in it, but they come very seldom to it, and allow themselves in the

52 An Invitation to the Lord's Supper.

Neglect and Omission of it. Frequent Opportunities they have for it, stated Meals provided for them, the Table spread and surnished. Others come, and they are invited, but time after time they ser it slip, and turn their Backs upon it, framing to themselves some sorry excuse or other to shift it off.

Shall I defire such to consider seriously

1. How powerful the Engagements are which we ly under, to be frequent and constant in our Attendance on the Lord in this Ordinance. 'Tis plainly intimated in the Institution, that the Solemnity is to be oft repeated; for it is said, Do this as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me. Baptism is to be administred but once, because it is the Door of Admission, and we are but once to enter by that Door; but the Lord's Supper is the Table in Christ's Family, at which we are to eat Bread continually, alluding to 2 Sam. 9. 13. The Law of Moles prescrib'd how oft the Passover must be celebrated, under very severe Penalties; but the Gospel being a Dispensation of greater Love and Liberty, only appoints us to observe its Passover oft, and then leaves it to our own Ingenuity and Pious Affections to fix the time, and determine how oft. If a Deliverance out of Egypt merited an annual Commemoration, surely our Redemption by Christ merits a more frequent one, especially since we need not go up to Ferusalem to do it. If this Tree of Life which bears more than twelve manner of Fruits, yieldeth her Fruit to us every Month, (Rev. 22.2.) I know not why we should neglect it any Month. Where there is the Truth of Grace, this Ordinance ought to be improv'd, which by virtue of the Divine Appointment, has a moral Influence upon cur Growth in Grace. The Great Master of the

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While we are often sinning, we have need to be often receiving the Sealof our Pardon, because, tho' the Sacrifice be perfect, and able to perfect for ever them which are fanctified, so that, that needs never to be repeated; yet the Application of it being imperfect (ad medum recipientis) has need to be often made afresh; the Worshippers, tho' once purged, having still Consciences of Sins in this defective State, (Heb. 10. 2.) they must oft have recourse to the Fountain open'd for the purging of their Consciences from the Pollutions contracted daily by dead Works, to serve the living God, Heb. 9. 14. Even he that is massed thus, needs to mass his Feet, or he cannot be easy, John 12. 10.

While we are often in temptation, we have need to be often renewing our Covenants with God, and fetching strength from Heaven for our spiritual Conflicts. Frequent fresh Recruits, and fresh Supplies, are necessary for those that are so closely besieged, and so vigorously attack'd by a potent Adversary. He improves all Advantages against us, therefore 'tis our Wisdom not to neglect any Advantage against him, and particularly not this Or-

dinance.

While we are often labouring under great coldness and deadness of Affection towards Divine Things, we need oft to use those means which are proper to kindle that Holy Fire, and keep it burning. We find by sad Experience that our Cole from the Altar is soon quench'd, our thoughts grow flat and low, and unconcern'd about the other World, by being so much conversant with this; we have therefore need to be often celebrating the Memorial of Christ's Death and Sufferings, than which nothing can be more affecting to a Christian, nor more proper to raise and refine

34 An Inviation to the Lord's Supper.

the Thoughts: 'Tis a Subject that more than once has made Disciples Hearts burn within them, Luke

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24. 32.

Much of our Communion with God is kept up by the renewing of our Covenant with him, and the frequent interchanging of folemn Assurances. Tis not superstuous, but highly serviceable both to our Holiness and our Comfort, oft to present our selves to God as living Sacrifices, alive from the dead. Tis a Token of Christ's Favour to us, and must not be slighted, that he not only admits, but invites us oft to repeat this Solemnity, and is ready again to sealto us, if we but ready to seal to him. Jonathan therefore caus'd David to swear again, because he keved him, I Sam. 20. 17. And an honest Mind will not startle at Assurances. Fast bind, fast sind.

2. Consider how poor the Excuses are with which Men commonly justify themselves in this neglect. They let slip many an Opportunity of attending upon the Lord in this Ordinance, and why

do they ?

Perhaps they are so full of Worldly Business, that they have neither time nor a Heart for that close Application to the Work of a Sacrament which they know is requisite: The Shop must be tended, Accounts must be kept, Debts owing 'em must be got in, and Debts they owe must be paid: It may be some Affair of more than ordinary Difficulty and Importance is upon their Hands, which they are in care about the Issue of, and till that be over, they think it is not amiss to withdraw from the Lord's Supper. And is this thy excuse? weigh it in the Ballances of the Sanctuary then, and consider; Is any Business more necessary than the doing of thy Duty to God, and the working out of thine own Salvation? Thou art careful and troubled about

about many things, but is not this the one thing needful, to which every thing else should be obliged to give way? Dost not thou think thy worldly Business would prosper and succeed the better for thy care about the main Matter? If it were lest at the Bottom of the Hill while thou comest hither to worship, might'st thou not return to it with greater hopes to speed in it? And do'st thou not spare time from thy Business for things of much less moment than this? Thou wilt find time, as buisy as thou art, to eat, and drink, and sleep, and converse with thy Friends, and is not the nourishment of thy Soul, its Repose in God, and Communion with him, much more necessary? I dare say, thou wilt own it is.

If indeed thou can'ft not allow so much time for folemn secret Worship in Preparation for this Ordinance, and Reflection upon it, as others do, and as thouthy felf sometimes hast done, and would'it do, yet let not that keep thee from the Ordinance ! Thy Heart may be in Heaven, when thy Hands are about the World; and a serious Christian may thro' God's Affiftance, do a great deal of work in a little time. If the Hours that should be thus employ'd, be trifled away in that which is idle and impertinent, it is our Sin; but if they be forc'd out of our Hands by necessary and unavoidable Avocations, it is but our Affliction, and ought not to hinder us from the Ordinance. The less time we have for Preparation, the more close and intent we should be in the Ordinance it felf, and so make up the loss. A welcome Guest never comes unseasonably to one that always keeps a good House.

But if indeed thy Heart is so set upon the World, so sill'd with the Cares of it, and so eager in the Pursuits of it, that thou hast no mind to the Comforts of this Ordinance, no Spirit nor Life for the Business of it, surely thou hast left thy first Love,

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and thou hast most need of all to come to this Ordinance for the Recovery of the Ground thou hast lost. Dost thou think that the Inordinacy of thine Affections to the World will be a passable Excuse for the Coldness of thine Affection to the Lord Jesus? Make haste, and get this matter mended, and conclude that thy worldly Business then becomes a Snare to thee, and thy Concern about it is excessive and inordinate, and an ill Symptom when it prevails to keep thee back from this Ordinance.

Perhaps fome unhappy Quarrels with Relations or Neighbours, some vexatious Law-suit they are engag d in, or some hot words that have past, are pleaded as an excuse for withdrawing from the Communion. They are not in Charity with others, or others are not in Charity with them, and they have been told (and 'tis undoubtedly true) the t'is better to stay away than come in Malice. tur then the Malice is fo far from being an excuse for the staying away, that really, the staying away is an Aggravation of the Malice. The Law in this Case is very express, If thy Brother has ought against thee, i. e. if thy Conscience tell thee that thou art the Party offending, do not therefore leave the Altar, but leave thy Gift before the Altar, as a Pawn for thy return, and go first and be reconciled to thy Brother, by confessing thy Fault, begging his Pardon, and making Satisfaction for the Wrong done, and then be fure to come and offer thy Gift, Mat. 5. 24. But on the other Hand, if ye have ought against any, if thou be the Party offended, then forgive, Mar. 11.25. Lay afide all uncharitable Thoughts, angry Refentments, and defire of Revenge, and be in a readiness to confirm and evidence your Love to those that have injur'd you, and then if they will not be reconcil'd to you, yet your being reconcil'd to them, is sufficient to remove that Bar in your

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way to this Ordinance. In short, Strife and Contention, as far as it is our Fault, must be truly repented of, and the Sincerity of our Repentance evidenc'd by amendment of Life, and then it needsnot hinder us; as far as it is our Cross, it must be patiently born, and we must not be disturb'd in our Minds by it, and then it needs not hinder us. And that Law-Suit which cannot be carried on without Malice, and hatred of our Brother, hads better be let fall, whatever we lofe. Law is costly indeed, when tis follow'd at the expence of Love: and Charity.

But (Lastly,) if the true Reason of your ab-senting your selves so often from the Lord's Suppers be, that you are not willing to take that Pains: with your own Hearts, and to lay that Restraint: upon your felves both before and after, which you. know you must if you come; if indeed you are: not willing to have your Thoughts fo closely fix'd, your Consciences so strictly examin'd, and your Engagements against Sin so strongly confirm'd, ass they will be by this Ordinance, if this be your case. you have reason to fear that the things which remain. are ready to dy. and your Works are net found filled up; before God. 'Tis a fad fign of Spiritual Deceirs and 'tis time for thee to remember whence thou art. fallen, and to repent, and do thy first works. Time: was when thou had'ft a dear love to this Ordinance. when thou longest for the Returns of it, and it was so thee more than thy necessary Food : Such was the: kindness of thy Youth, such the Love of thine Espo fals, but is it otherwise now? Do you now set locke to it? Are you indifferent whether you enjoy? the Benefit of it or no? Can you contentedly live: without it? You have reason to fear lest you are: of those that are drawing back to Perdition. Having: begun in the Spirit, will you now end in the Flofa to Dis

What iniquity have you found in this Ordinance that you have thus for saken it? Has it been as a barren Wilderness to you, or as Waters that fail? If ever it were fo, wasit not your own fault? Return therefore ye backfliding Children, be perswaded to return; return to God, return to your Duty, to this Duty; be close and constant to it as you were formerly, for, I dare fay, then it was better with you

than now, Hof. 2. 7.

Those that by the Grace of God do still keep up a love for this Ordinance, should contrive their Affairs so, as (if possible) not to miss any of their stated Opportunities for it. Thomas by being once absent from a Meeting of the Disciples, lost that joyful fight of Christ which the rest then had. 'Tis good to have a Nail in God's Holy Place, Ezr. 9. 8. Blessed are they that dwell in his House, not those that only sojourn there as a way-faring Man, that turns afide to tarry but for a Night, but those that

take it for their Home, their rest for ever.

Yet if God by his Providence prevent our Enjoyment of an expected Opportunity of this kind, at any time, tho' we must lament it as an afflictive Difappointment, and take that Occasion to humble our selves for our former unprofitableness, yet we may comfort our selves with this, that the God has ty'd us to Ordinances, he has not ty'd himself to them, but by his Grace can make Providences work instead of them, for the good of our Souls. It is better to be like David under a forced Absence from God's Altars, and have our Hearts there, (Pfal. 84. 1, 2.) than to be like Doeg, present under a force, detained before the Lord, I Sam. 21.7. and the Heart going after the Coveruousness. 'Tis better be lamenting and longing in the want of Ordinances, than lothing in the fulnels. of them.

CHAP. IV.

Helps for Self-Examination before we come to this Ordinance.

HOW earnest soever we are in pressing People to join themselves to the Lord in this Ordinance, we would not have them to be rash with their Mouth, nor hasty to utter any thing before God, Eccl. 5. 2. It must be done, but it must be done with great Caution and Confideration. Bounds must be fet about the Mount on which God will descend, and we must address our selves to selemn Services with a Solemn Paufe. It is not enough that we feek God in a due Ordinance, but we must feek him in a due Order, I Chron. 15. 13. that is, we must stir up our selves to take hold on bim, Ifa. 64. 7. Prepare to meet thy God O Ifrael, Amos 4. 12. Those that labour under fuch an habitual Indisposition to Communion with God, and are liable to fo many actual Discomposures as we are conscious to our felves of, have need to take pains with their Hearts, and should with a very serious Thought and steady Resolution, engage them to approach unto God.

Now the Duty most expressly required in our Preparation for the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, is that of Self-Examination. The Apostle when he would restiff the Abuses which had fully'd the Beauty of this Sacrament in the Church of Corinth, prescribes this great Duty as necessary to the due Management of it, and a Preservative against sharing in the Guilt of such Corruptions; 1:Cor. 11. 28. But let a Manexamine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.

He that desires the Lord's Supper (to allade to that of the Apostle, 1 Tim. 3. 1.) desires a good work, but as it follows there, ver. 10. let these also for first be proved, let them prove their own selves, 2 Cor. 13.5. and so let them come; so upon that Condition, so with that Preparation, as Psal. 26.6. I will wash my hands in innocency, so will I compass thine Altar: in this method we must proceed.

To Examine our selves is to discourse with our own Hearts; 'tis to converse with our selves, a very rational, needful, and improving piece of Conversation. When we go about this Work, we must retire from the World, see alone and keep silence; we must retire into our own Bosoms, and consider our selves, rested upon our selves, enquire concerning our selves, enter into a solemn Conference with our own Souls, and be inquisitive concerning their State. Those who are ignorant and cannot do this, or careless and secure and will not do it, are unmeet for this Ordinance.

Shall I illustrate this by some Similitudes?

min'd by the Touch-Stone, whether it be right or counterfeit. We have a shew of Religion, but are we what we seem to be? Are we current Coin,

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or only wash'd over, as a Pot-sherd cover'd with Silver Dross? Prov. 26. 23. Hypocrites are reprobate. Silver, Fer. 6. 30. True Christians, when they are tried, come forth as Gold, 3ob 23. 10. The Word of God is the Touch-Stone by which we must try, our felves; can I thro' Grace answer the Characters which the Scripture gives of those whom Christ will own and save? Tistrue, the best Coyn has an allay, which will be allow'd for in this State of Imperfection; but the Question is, Is it Sterling, is it Standard? Though I am conscious to my. felf, there are Remainders of a baser Metal, yet, is Love to God the Predominant Principle? Are the Interests of Christ the Prevailing Interests in my. Soul above those of the World and the Flesh? I bear God's Image and Superscription, is it of God's own flamping? Is it upon an honest, and good Heart? 'Tis a matter of great Consequence, and in which tis very common, but very dangerous to be impos'd upon, and therefore we have need to be jealous over our selves. When we are bid to my the Spirits, 1 John 4. I. 'tis suppos'd we must begin with our own, and try them first.

2. We must examine our selves as a Malesator is examin'd by the Magistrate, that we may find out what we have done amis. We are all Criminals, that's readily acknowledg'd by each of us, because its own'd to be the common Character, all have similarly find, and come short of the Glory of God; We are all Prisoners to the Divine Justice, from the Arrests of which we cannot escape, and to the Processes of which we lie obnoxious: Being thus in custody, that we may not be judged of the Lord, we are commanded to judge our selves, 1. Cor. 11. 31. We must enquire into the particular Crimes we have been guilty of, and their Circumstances, that we may discover more Sins, and more of the Evil of them than at first we were aware of. Dig into the Wall,

Wall, as Ezekiel did, Chap. 8. 8. and see the secret Abominations of your own Hearts; look further as he did, ver. 13, 15. and you will see more and greater. The Heart is deceitful, and has many Devices, many Evasions, to shift off Convictions; we have therefore need to be very particular and strict in examining them, and to give them that Charge which Joshua gave to Achan, when he had him under Examination, Josh. 7. 19. Give Glory unto the God of Israel, and make Confession unto him; tell me

now what thou hast done, hide it not from me.

2. We must examine our selves as a Copy is examin'd by the Original, to find out the Errata, that they may be corrected. As Christians we profess to be the Epiftles of Christ, 2 Cor. 3. 3. to have his Law and Love transcrib'd into our Hearts and Lives; but we are concern'd to enquire whether it be a true Copy, by comparing our felves with the Gofpel of Christ, whether our Affections and Conversations be conformable to it, and such as becomes it. How far do I agree with it, and where are the Difagreements? What Mistakes are there. what Blots, and what Omissions? that what bath been amiss may be pardon'd, and what is amiss may be rectified. In this Examination, Faith must read the Original, and then let Conscience read the Copy, and be fure that it read true, because there will shortly be a Review.

4. We must examine our selves as a Candidate is examin'd that stands for Preserment. Enquiry is made into his sitness for the Preserment he stands for: We are Candidates for Heaven, the highest Preserment, to be to our God, Kings and Priests. We stand for a Place at the Wedding-Feast: Have we on the Wedding-Garment? Are we made meet for the Inheritance? What Knowledge have we? What Grace? Are we skill'd in the Mystery we make Prosession of? What improvement have

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we made in the School of Christ? What Proficiency in Divine Learning? What Testimonials have we to produce? Can we shew the Seal of the Spirit of Promise? Have we a Ticket? If not, we shall not be welcome.

5. We must examine our selves as a Wife is examin'd of her Consent to the levying of a Fine for the confirming of a Covenant. 'Tis a common Ulage of the Law: A Covenant is to be ratified between God and our Souls in the Lord's Supper; do we freely and chearfully consent to that Covenant? not meerly through the Constraint of Natural Conscience, but because it is a Covenant highly reasonable in it self, and unspeakably advantagious to us: Am I willing to make this Surrender of my felf unto the Lord ? Am I freely willing ? not because I cannot help it, but because I cannot better dispose of my self: We must examine our selves as Followa examined the People whether they would chuse to serve the Lord or no ? Josh. 24. 15, &c. and the Product of the Enquiry must be a fixed Resolution, like theirs, ver. 21. Nay, but we will ferve the Lord.

Man is examin'd concerning his Business. Our trissing Hearts have need to be examin'd as Vagrants, whence they come, whither they go, and what they would have: We are coming to a great Ordinance, and are concern'd to enquire what's our end in coming? What brings us thither? Is it only Custom or Company that draws us to this Duty, or is it a Spiritual Appetite to the Dainties of Heaven? Our Hearts must be catechiz'd as Elijah was, I Kin. 19.9. What dest thou here Elijah? That we may give a good Account to God of the Sincerity of our Intentions in our Approach to him, we ought before we come, to call our selves to an

account concerning them.

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More particularly, to examine our selves, is to put serious Questions to our selves, and to our own Hearts; and to prosecute them till a full and true. Answer be given to them. These six Questions (among others) it is good for each of us to put to our selves in our Preparation to the Lord's Supper, both at our first Admission, and in our after-Approaches to it. What am. I? What have I done? What am I doing? What Ground do I get? What do I want? And what shall I resolve to do?

First, Enquire, What am 1? It needs no Enquity, but it calls for ferious Confideration, that I am a reasonable Creature, lower than the Angels, higher than the Brutes, capable of knowing. ferving and glorifying God in this World, and of feeing and enjoying him in a better. I am made for my Creator, and am accountable to him: This I am, God grant I have not fuch a noble and excellent Being in vain! But here this Question has another meaning; all the Children of Men by the Fall of the first Adam, are become Sinners; some of the Children of Men by the Grace of the second Adam, are become Saints; some remain in a State of Nature, others are brought into a State of Grace; some are fanctified, others unsanctified: This is a. Distinction which divides all Mankind, and which will last when all other Divisions and Subdivisions. shall be no more; for according to this, will the Everlasting State be determin'd. Now when I ask, What am I? the meaning is, which of these two do I belong to? Am I in the Favour of God, or under his Wrath and Curse? Am I a Servant of God, or a Slave to the World and the Flesh? Look forwards, and ask, Whither am I going? To Heaven or Hell? If I should dy by Night (and I am not fure to live till to-morrow) whither would Death bring me? Whether would Death lodge me? me? In endless Light, or in utter Darkness? Am I in the Narrow Way that leads to Life, or in the Broad Way that leads to Destruction? I am called a Christian, but am I a Christian indeed? Have

I a Nature answerable to the Name?

It highly concerns us all to be firict and impartial in this Enquiry; what will it avail us to deceive our felves? God cannot be impos'd upon, tho' Men may. It is undoubtedly true, if we be not Saints on Earth, we shall never be Saints in Heaven; It is not a small thing which I am now perswading? thee to enquire about; no, it is thy Life, thy precious Life, the Life of thy Soul, thine Eternal Life which depends upon it. Multitudes have been deceiv'd in this Matter, whose Way feemed right, but the End of it prov'd the Ways of Death; and after they had long flatter'd themselves in their own Eyes, they perish'd at last with a Ly in their Rightband. We also are in danger of being deceiv'd, and therefore have need to be jealous over our felves with a Godly Jealoufy; and being told that many who eat and drink in Christ's Presence will be disown'd and rejected by him in the Great Day, we have each of us more reason to suspett our selves than the Disciples had, and to ask, Lord is it 1?

But it especially concerns us to insist upon this Enquiry when we draw near to God in the Lord's Supper. Tis Childrens Bread that is there prepar'd; Am I a Child ? if not, I have no partner lot in the matter; I am there to seal a Covenant with God, but if I never made the Covenant, never in sincerity confented to it, I shall put the Seal to a Blank, nay, to

a Curse.

Therefore that I may discover in some measure what my Spiritual State is, let me seriously enquire,

1. What Choice have I made? Have I chofen God's Favour for my Felicity and Satisfaction, or the Pleasures of Sense and the Wealth of this World? Since I came to be capable of acting for my felf, and discerning between my Right-hand and my Left, have I made Religion my deliberate Choice? Have I chosen God for my Portion, Christ for my Master, the Scripture for my Rule, Holiness for my Way, and Heaven for my Home and Everlasting Rest? If not, how can I expect to have what I never chose? If my Covenant with the World and the Flesh (which certainly amounts to a Covenant with Death and an Agreement with Hell) be still in force, and never yet broken, never yet disannull'd, what have I to do to take God's Covenant, and the Seal of it into my Mouth? But if I have refused Satan's Offers of the Kingdoms of this World and the Glory of them, and given the Preference to the Gospel Offer of a Kingdom in the other World, and the Glory of that, I have reason Pfal. 16. 4, 5, 6, 7. and to hope that he who hath directed me to chuse the way of Truth, will enable me to flick to his Testimonies, Pfal, 119. 30, 31.

2. What Change have I experienced? When I ask, Am I a Child of Wrath or a Child of Love? I must remember that I was by Nature a Child of Wrath; now can I witness to a Change? Tho I cannot exactly tell the Time, and Manner, and Steps of that Change, yet one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see, John 9. 25. Tho in many Respects it is still bad with me, yet thanks be to God it is better with me than it has been. Time was when I minded nothing but Sport and Pleasure, or nothing but the Business of this World, when I never seriously thought of God and Christ,

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and my Soul, and another World, but now it is otherwise; now I see a Reality in invisible things, I find an Alteration in my Care and Concern; and now I ask more sollicitously, What shall I do to be Sav'd; than ever I ask'd, What Shall I ear, or what Shall I drink, or wherewithal Shall I be cloath'd? Time was when this vain and carnal Heart of mine had no relish at all of Holy Ordinances, took no delight in them, call'd them a Task and a Weariness: But now it's otherwise; I love to be alone with God, and tho' I bring little to pass, yet I love to be doing in his Service. If I have indeed experienced fuch a Change as this, if this bleffed turn be given to the Bent of my Soul, Grace, Free Grace, must have the Glory of it, and I may take the Comfort of it. But if I have not found any fuch Work wrought in my Heart, if I am still what I was by nature, vain, and carnal, and careless, if Fordan run still in the old Chanel, and was never yet driven back before the Ark of the Covenant, I have reason to suspect the worst by my felf. If all go one way without struggle or opposition, 'tis to be fear'd 'tis not the right way.

3. What is the Bent of my Affections? The Affections are the Pulse of the Soul; if we would know it's state, we must observe how that Pulse beats. How do I stand affected to Sin? Do I dread it as most dangerous, loath it as most odious, and complain of it as most grievous? or do I make a light matter of it, as the Mad-man that casteth Firebrands, Arrows, and Death, and saith, Am not I in sport? Which lies heaving, the Burthen of Sin or the Burthen of Assistance, and which am I most desirous to be eas'd of? What think I of Christ? How do I stand affected to him? Do I love him and prize him as the fairest of ten thousands in himself, and the sittest of twenty thousands for me? Or hath he in mine Eyes no form nor comelines, and

is he no more than another Beloved? How do I fland affected to the Word and Ordinances ? Are God's Tabernacles amiable with me, or are they despicable? Am I in God's Service as in my Element, as one that calls it a Delight, or am I in it as under Confinement, and as one that calls it a Drudgery? How do I stand affected to good People? Do I love the Image of Christ wherever I fee it, tho'it be in Rags, or tho' not in mine own Colour? Do I honour them that fear the Lord, and chuse his People for my People in all Conditions? Or do I prefer the Gaieties of the World before the Beauties of Holiness? How do I stand affected to this World? Is it under my Feet where it thould be, or in my Heart where Christ should be? Do I value it, and love it, and feek it with a prevailing Concern? or do I look upon it with a Holy Contempt and Indifferency? Which have the greater Command over me, and which, in my Account, have the most powerful and attractive Charms those Riches, Honours, and Pleasures that are worldly, or those that are Spiritual and Divine? ---How do I stand affected to the other World? Do I dread Eternal Misery in a World of Spirits more than the greatest temporal Calamities here in this World of Sense? Do I desire Eternal Happiness in a future State more than the highest Contentments. and Satisfactions this present State can pretend to? Or are the things of the other World, tho' fure and near, look'd upon as doubtful and diffant, and consequently little? By a close Prosecution of such Enquiries as these, with a Charge to Conscience in God's Name, we make true Answer to them, we may come to know our own felves.

4. What is the Course and Tenor of our Conversations? The Tree is known by its Fruits. Do I work the Works of the Flesh, or bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit. The Apostle gives us Instances of

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rea wh both, Gal. 5. 19. --- 23. Be not deceived your selves, neither let any Man deceive you; He that doth righteousness is righteous, I John 3. 7. and the furest Mark of Uprightness is keeping our selves from our own Iniquity, 2 Sam. 22.24. Do I allow my felf in any known Sin under the Cloke of a visible Profession? Dare I upon any Provocation swear, or curse, or prophane God's Holy Name, and therein speak the Language of bis Enemies? Dare I upon any Allurement, to please my Appe-tite, or please my Company, drink to excess, and facrifice my Reason, Honour, and Conscience to that base and brutish Lust? Dare I defile a Living Temple of the Holy Ghoft by Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, or any Act of Lasciviousness? Dare I tell a Lie for my Gain or Reputation? Dare I go beyond or defraud my Brother in any matter, cheat these I deal with, or oppress those I have advantage against? Dare I deny relief to the Poor that really need it, when it is in the Power of my Hand to give it? Dare I bear Malice to any. and fludy revenge? If fo, I must know that these are not the Spots of God's Children, Deut. 32. 5. If this be the Life I live, I am certainly a Stranger to the Life of God. But if upon Search my own Heart tells me that I keep my felf pure from these Pollutions, and herein exercise my self to have always Conscience void of Offence, both towards God and towards Man. If I have a respect to all God's Commandments, and make it my daily Care in every thing, to frame my Life according to them, and to keep in the Fear of God every day, and all the day long, and wherein I find I am defective and come short of my Duty, I repent of it, and am more watchful and diligent for the future, I have reason to hope, that tho' I have not yet attained, neither am already perfect, yet there is a good Work begun in me, which shall be perform'd unto the Day of Christ. Thus

Thus we must examine our Spiritual State, and that the Trial may come to an issue, we must earnestly pray to God to discover us to our selves, and must be willing to know the truth of our Case; and the Result must be this.

(1.) If we find cause to sear that our Spiritual State is bad, and that we are yet unsanctified and unregenerate, we must give all diligence to get the matter mended. If our State be not good, yet thanks be to God, it may be made good. There is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Rest not therefore in thy former faint Purposes, and seeble Efforts, but consider more seriously than ever, the Concerns of thy Soul; pray more earnestly than ever, for the Sanctifying Grace of God; put forth thy self more vigorously than ever, to improve that Grace; resolve more simply than ever to live a Holy Life, and depend more closely than ever upon the Merit and Strength of Jesus Christ, and I hope thou wilt soon experience a blessed Change.

(2.) If we find cause to hope that our Spiritual State is good, we must take the Comfort of it, and give God the Praise, and not hearken to the Tempter when he would disturb our Peace, and hinder our Progress by calling it in Question. Tho we must always abase our selves, and be jealous over our selves, yet we must not derogate from the Honour of God's Grace, nor deny its Work in us. God keep us all both from deceiving our selves with Groundless Hopes, and from disquieting our

felves with Groundless Fears.

Secondly, Enquire, What have I done? We come to the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper to receive the Remission of our Sins, according to the Tenor of the New Covenant: Now one thing requir'd of us, in order to Peace and Pardon, is, That we con-

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fels our Sins: If we do that, God is faithful and just to forgive them, 1 70hn 1.9. But if we cover them we cannot profper, Prov. 28. 12. Not that we can by our Confessions inform God of any thing he did not know before, as earthly Princes are inform'd by the Confession of Criminals, but thus we must give Glory to God, and take shame to our felves. and strengthen our own Guard against Sin for the future. In the Confession of Sin it is requisite that we be particular: The High Priest on the Day of Atonement, must confess over the Scape Goat, all the Iniquities of the Children of Israel, and all their Transgressions in all their Sins, Lev. 16. 21. It is not enough to fay as Saul. I have simmed, 1 Sam. 15.30. but we must fay as David, I have sinned, and done this Evil, Pfal. 51.4. As Achan, I have finned, and thus and thus have I done, Fef. 7. 20. A broken Heart will hereby be more broken, and better prepar'd to be bound up: A burthen'd Conscience will hereby be eas'd as David's was, when he faid, I will confess, Plal. 32. 3. 4, 5. Commonly the more particular and free we are in confessing our Sins to God, the more comfort we have in the Sense of the Pardon : Deceit lies in Generals.

It is therefore necessary in order to a particular Confession of Sin, that we search and try our Ways, Lam. 3. 40. that we examine our Consciences, look over their Records, reslect upon the Actions of our Life past, and seriously call to mind wherein we have offended God in any thing. The putting of this Question is spoken of as the first step towards Repentance, Jer. 8. 6. No man repented him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done? For want of this Enquiry duly made when Men are call'd to return, they basse the Call with that careless Question, Mal. 3. 7. Wherein shall we return? Let us therefore set our selves to look back, and remember our Faults this Day; it is better to be minded

of 'em now, when the Remembrance of them will open us a Door of Hope, than be minded of them in Hell, where Son remember, will aggravate an endless Despair. We ought to be often calling our selves to account; in the Close of every Day, of every Week, the Day's work, the Week's work should be received. Tis one of the richest of Pythagoras's Golden Verses, that wherein, tho' a Heathen, he adviseth his Pupil every Night before he sleep, to go over the Actions of the Day, and revolve them three times in his Mind, asking himself seriously these Questions.

in have I transgress ? What have I done? What Duty hath been omitted? The oftner it is done, the easier it is done: Even Reckonings make long Friends: But it is especially necessary that it be done before a Sacrament: Former Resections made, ought then to be repeated, and with a particular exactness we must consider what our Ways have been since we were last renewing our Covenants with God at his Table, that we may be humbled for the Follies we have return'd to since God spoke Peace to us, and may be more particular and steddy in our Resolutions for the future.

To give some Azistance in this Enquiry, I shall instance in some Heads of it. Let the Interrogatories be such as these.

1. How have I employed my Thoughts? Hath God been in all my Thoughts? 'Tis well if he has been in any: When I awake, am I still with him? Or am I not still with the World and the Flesh? When I should have been contemplating the Glory of God, the Love of Christ, and the great things of the other World, hath not my Heart been with the Fool's Eyes in the Ends of the Earth, following after wins

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How feldom have I thought seriously, and with any fixedness of Spiritual and Divine Things? I set my self sometimes to meditate, but I soon break off abruptly, and this treacherous Heart starts aside like a broken Bow, and nothing that's Good is brought to any Head: But how have vain Thoughts and vile Thoughts lodg'd within me, gone out and come in with me, lain down and risen up with me, and crowded out good Thoughts? Hath not the Imagination of the Thought of my Heart been evil, only evil, and that continually? Gen. 8, 21.

been kept under the Dominion of Religion and right Reason, or have they not grown intemperate and headstrong, and transgress'd due Bounds? Have not Provocations been too much resented, and made too deep an Impression? Hath not my Heart many a time been bot within me, too hot, so that its Heat hath consumed the Peace of my own Mind, and the Love I owe my Brother? Hath not Anger rested in my Bosom? Have not Malice and Uncharitableness, secret Enmitties and Antipathies been harbour'd there, where Love and Peace should

have reign'd and given Law?

3. How have I preserved my Purity? Have I possessed my Vessel in Sanctification and Honour, or am I not conscious to my self of indulging the Lusts of Uncleanness? If by the Grace of God I have kept my Body pure, yet hath not my Spirit been desiled by impure Thoughts and Affections? I have made a Covenant with mine Eyes not to look and lust, but have I made good that Covenant? Have I in no instance transgress'd the Laws of Chastity in my Heart, and Modestyin my Behaviour? Let this Enquiry be made with a strict Guard upon the Soul, lest that which should not be named among Christians,

flians, be thought of without that just Abhorrence

and Detestation which becometh Saints.

4. How have I us'd my Tongue? It was designed to be my Glory, but has it not been my Shame? Hath not much corrupt Communication proceeded out of my Mouth, and little of that which is good, which might either manifest Grace, or minister Grace? Have not I sometimes spoke unadvisedly, and said that in haste, which at leisure I could have wish'd unsaid? Have not I said that by which God's great Name hath been dishonour'd, or my Brother's good Name reproach'd, or my own expos'd? If for every idle Word that I speak I must give Account to God, I had best call my self to an Account for them, and I shall find innumerable of these Evils compassing me about.

1. How have I spent my time? So long I have liv'd in the World, to what purpose have I liv'd? What improvement have I made of my Days for doing or getting good? 'Tis certain I have lost time, have I yet begun to redeem it, and to repair those Losses? How many Hours have I spent that might have been spent much better? There is a Duty which every Day requires, but how little of it

hath been done in its Day?

I therein abode with God, or have I not in many Instances of it wandred from him? Have I been just and sair in all my Dealings, and spoken the Truth from my Heart? Or have I not sometimes dealt deceitfully in Bargaining, and said that which border'd upon a Ly? Hath not slessly Wisdom govern'd me more than that simplicity and godly sincerity which becomes an Israelite indeed? Have I no Wealth gotten by Vanity, no unjust gain, no bolt of that kind cleaving to my Hand?

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never transgress'd the Laws of Temperance in Meat and Drink, and so made my Table my Snare? Have not God's good Gifts been abus'd to Luxury and Sensuality, and the Body, which by the sober use of them, should have been sitted, by the excessive use of them, dissitted to serve the Soul in the Service of God? Have not I eaten to my self and drunk to my self, (Zech. 7. 6.) when I should have eaten and drunk to the Glory of God?

8. How have I done the Duty of my particular Relations? The Word of God hath expressy taught me my Duty as a Husband, a Wife, a Parent, a Child, a Master, a Servant, but have I not in many things fail'd of my Duty? Have not I carried my self disrespectfully to my Superiors, disdainfully to my Inseriors, and disingenuously to my Equals? Have I given to each that which is just and right, and rendred to all their Dues? Have I been a Comfort to my Relations, or have I not caused Grief?

I been constant to it, Morning and Evening, or have I not sometimes omitted it, and put it by with some frivolous Excuse? Have I been conscientious in it, and done it with an Eye to God, or have I not kept it up meerly as a Custom, and suffer'd it to degenerate into a Formality? Have I been lively and serious in secret Prayer and Reading, or have I not rested in the outside of the Performance, without any close Application and Intention of Mind in it?

the World? I am but a Steward, have I been faithful? Have I honour'd the Lord with my Substance, and done good with it, or have I wasted and misapplied my I ord's Goods? Hath God had his Dues, my Family and the Poor their Dues out

of my Estate? What should have been consecrated to Piety and Charity; hath it not been either

finfully spar'd, or finfully spent?

the Helps I have had for my Soul? I enjoy great Plenty of the means of Grace, have I grown in Grace in the use of those Means, or have I not received the Grace of God therein in vain? Have I call d the Sabbath a Delight boly of the Lord and honourable, or have I not soulf d at it and said, When will the Sabbath be gone? How have I prositted by Sermons and Sacraments, and other the Advantages of solemn Assemblies? Have I received and retain'd the good Impressions of Holy Ordinances, or have I not lost them, and let them slip?

12. How have I born my Afflictions? When Providence hath cross'd me, and frown'd upon me, what Frame have I been in, Repining or Repenting? Have I submitted to the Will of God in my Afflictions, and patiently accepted the Punishment of my Iniquity, or have not I striven with my Maker, and quarrel'd with his Disposals? When mine own Foolishness hath perverted my way, hath not my Heart fretted against the Lord? What Good have I gotten to my Soul by my Affictions? What inward Gain by outward Losses? Hath my Heart been more humbled and weaned from the World? Or have I not been hardned under the Rod, and

Many more such Queries might be instanced in, but those may suffice for a Specimen. Yet it will not suffice to put these Questions to our selves, but we must diligently observe what return Conscience, upon an impartial Search, makes to them; we must not do as Pilate did, when he ask'd our Saviour, What is truth? but would not stay for an Answer, John 18. 38: No, we must take Pains to find out what hath been amis, and herein must accomplish a diligent Search.

And

trespass'd yet more against the Lord?

And, I. As far as we find our felves not guilty, we must own our Obligations to the Grace of God, and return Thanks for that Grace, and let the Testimony of Conscience for us, be our rejoicing. If our Hearts condemn us not, then have we considence towards God.

2. As far as we find our felves guilty, we must be humbled before God for it, mourn and be in bitterness at the Remembrance of it, cry earnestly to God for the Pardon of it, and be particular in our Resolutions, by God's Grace, to sin no more. Pray as Job, That which I see not, teach thou me; and promise as he did, Wherein I have done Iniquity, I will do no more.

Thirdly, Enquire, What am I doing? When we have consider'd what our way hath been, 'tis time to consider what it is. Ponder the Path of thy Feet, Prov. 4. 26.

Conversation? Am I doing any thing for God, for my Soul, for Eternity, any thing for the Service of my Generation, or am I not standing all the Day idle? Tis the Law of God's House as well as of ours; he that will not labour, let him not eat, 2 Thes. 3. 10. If I find that according as my Capacity and Opportunity is thro' the Grace of Christ, I am going on in the Way of God's Commandments, this Ordinance will be comforting and quickning to me; but if I give way to spiritual sloth and slumber, and do not mind my Business, let this shame me out of it, and humble me for it: How unworthy am I to eat my Master's Bread, while I take no care to do my Master's Work?

2. What am I doing in this Approach to the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper? I know what is to be done, but am I doing it? Do I apply my self

to it in fincerity, and with a fingle Eye, in a right manner, and for right Ends? Am I by repentance andoing that which I have done amis? and am I by senewing my Covenants with God, doing that better which I have formerly done well? Am I joining my self unto the Lord with purpose of Heart to cleave to him unto the End? It is the Preparation for the Passover; am I doing the Work of that Day inits Day? Am I purging out the old Leaven, buying such things as I have need of against the Feast, without Money and without Price? Am I engaging my Heart to approach unto God, or am I thinking of something else? Am I sloathful in this Business, or do I make a Business of it?

Here it is good to examine, whether befide the common and general Intentions of this Ordinance, there be not fomething particular, which I should more especially have in my Eye in my Preparation for it. Do I find my Heart at this time more than mully broken for Sin, and humbled at the Remembrance of it? Let me then set in vigorously with those Impressions, and drive that Nail; or is my Heart in a special manner affected with the Love of Christ, and enlarg'd in Holy Wonder, Joy, and Praise? Let its out-goings that way be quicken'd, and those Thoughts imprinted deep, and improv'd;

to of the like,

Fourthly, Enquire, What Ground do I get? If upon Examination there appear some Evidences of the Truth of Grace, I must then examine my Growth in Grace; for Grace, if it be true, will be growing: That Well of Water will be springing up; and be that bath clean Hands will be stronger and stronger. There is a spiritual Death, or at least some prevailing Spiritual Disease where there is not some Improvement and Progress towards Perfection.

By what measures then may I try my growth in Grace?

I. Do I find my Practical Judgment more settled and confirmed in its Choice of Holiness and Heaven? If so, it is a Sign I am gerting forward. We cannot judge of our felves by the Pangs of Affection, those may be more sensible and vehement at first, and their being less so, afterwards ought not to difcourage us: The Fire may not blaze fo high as it did, and yet may burn better and stronger. But do I see more and more Reason for my Religion? Am I more strongly convinc'd of its Certainty and Excellency, fo as to be able better than at first to give a Reason of the Hope that is in me? My first Love was able to call Religion a comfortable Service, was my after-light better able to call it a rea-Sonable Service? I was extreamly surprized when at first I saw Men as Trees walking, but am I now better satisfied when I begin to see all things more clearly? Mar. 8. 24, 25. Am I thro' God's Grace better rooted, or am I thro' my own Folly still as a Reed Shaken with the Wind?

2. Do I find my Corrupt Appetites and Passions more manageable? Or, are they still as violent and headstrong as ever? Doth the House of Saul grow weaker and weaker, and its Struggles for the Dominion less frequent, and more feeble? If so, is a good Sign the House of David grows stronger and stronger. Though these Canaanites are in the Land, yet they do not make head as they have done, but are under tribute, then the Interests of Israel are getting Ground. Do I find that my Desires towards those things that are pleasing to Sense, are not so eager as they have been, but the Body is kept under more, and brought into Subjection to Grace and Wisdom, and it is not so hard a.

thing to me as it hath been fometimes to deny my felf? Do I find that my Refentments of those things which are displeasing to the Flesh, are not fo deep and keen as they have been? Can I bear Afflictions from a Righteous God, and Provocations from unrighteous Men, with more patience, and better composure and command of my self than I could have done? Am not I so pievish and fretful, and unable to bear an Affront or Disappointment, as sometimes I have been? If so, surely he that hath begun the good work is carrying it on: But if nothing be done towards the suppressing of these Rebels, towards the Weeding out of these Roots of bitterness which spring up and trouble us, tho' we lament them, yet we do not prevail against them, 'tis to be fear'd we stand at a stay, or go back.

3. Do I find the Duties of Religion more easy and pleasant to me? Or am I still as unskilful and unready in them as ever? Do I go dextrously about a Duty, as one that understands it, and is us'd to it, and as a Manthat is Master of his Trade goes on with the Business of it? Or do I go awkwardly about it as one not vers'd in it? When God calls, feek ye my Face, do I like the Child Samuel, run to Eli. and terminate my Regards in the out-fide of the Service, or do I like the Man David, chearfully an-Iwer, Thy Face Lord will I seek, and so enter into Tho' on the one Hand there that within the Veil. is not a greater support to Hypocrify than a formal and customary Road of External Performances, Son the other Hand there is not a furer Evidence of Sincerity and Growth, than an even conftant fleddy Course of lively Devotion, which by daily use becomes familiar and easy, and (by the new Nature) natural to us. A growing Chri-Mian takes his Work before him, and fings at it.

Supply

4. Do I find my Heart more weaned from this prefent Life, and more willing to exchange it for a better? or am I still loth to leave? Are thoughts of Death more pleasing to me than they have been, or are they still as terrible as ever? If thro' Grace we are got above that Fear of Death, by reason of which many weak and trembling Christians are all their life-time subject to bondage, and can truly say, we desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better, 'tis certain we are getting ground, tho' we have not yet attained.

If upon Search we find, that we make no progress in Grace and Holiness, let the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper be improved for the Furtherance of our Growth, and the Removal of that, whatever it is, which hinders it: If we find we thrive, tho' but slowly, and that tho' it is not so well with us as it should be, yet thro' Grace it is better with us than it hath been, and that we are not always Babes, let us be encouraged to abound so much the more. Go on and prosper, the Lord is with thee, while thou art

with him.

Fifthly, Enquire, What do I want? A true sense of our Spiritual Necessities is required to qualify us for Spiritual Supplies. The Hungry only are filled with good things. It concerns us therefore when we come to an Ordinance, which is as a Spiritual Market, to consider what we have occasion for, that we may know what to lay hold on, and may have an Answer ready to that Question which will be put to us at the Banquet of Wine, What is thy Petition, and what is thy Request? Or that which Christ put to the blind Men, Mat. 20. 32. What will ye that I shall do unto you?

Grace and Peace from God the Father, and from eur Lord Jesus Christ, are inclusive of all the Blessings we can desire, and have in them enough to

supply all our needs: Since therefore we must ask and receive, that our Joy may be full, it concerns us to enquire what particular Grace and Comfort we need, that we may by Faith and Desire reach forth towards that in a special manner.

1. What Grace do I most want? Wherein do I find my felf most defective, weakest, and most expos'd? What Corruption do I find working most in me? the Grace that is opposite to that I most need. Am I apt to be proud or passionate? Humility and Meekness then are the Graces I most want. Am I apt to be timorous and distrustful? Faith and Hope then are the Graces I most want. What Temptations am I most frequently assaulted with? which way doth Satan get most advantage against me by my Constitution, Calling, or Company? there I most want Help from Heaven, and Strength to double my Guard. Am I in danger of being drawn by my outward Circumstances to Intemperance, or Deceit, or Oppression, or Dissimulation? then Sobriety, Justice, and Sincerity are the Graces I most want. --- What is the Nature of the Duties I am mostly call'd out to and employ'd in? Are they such as oblige me to stoop to that which is mean? then Self-denial is the Grace I most want : Are they fuch as oblige men to fruggle with that which is difficult and discouraging? then Courage and Wisdom are the Graces I most want. Whatever our Wants are, there are Promises in the New Covenant adapted to them, which in this Ordinance we must in a particular manner apply to our felves, and claim the Benefit of, and receive as feal'd to us. If we cannot bethink our felves of particular Promises suited to our Case, yet there is enough in the general ones; I will put my Spirit within you, and onufe you to walk in my Statutes, Ezek. 36. 27. I will put my Law in your Hearts, Heb. 8. 10. and my Fear, Fear, Jer. 32.40 and many the like. And we know who hath faid, My Grace is sufficient for thee,

2 Cor. 12. 9.

2. What Comfort do I most want? What is the Burthen that lies most heavy? I must seek for Support under that Burthen. What is the Grief that is most Grieving? I must seek for a Ballance to that Grief. The guilt of Sin is oft disquieting to me. O for the Comfort of a sealed Pardon! The Power of Corruption is very discouraging, O for the Comfort of victorious Grace! I am oft tofs'd with Doubts and Fears about my Spiritual State, as if the Lord had utterly separated me from his People, and I were a dry Tree, (Isa. 56. 3.) O for the Comforr of clear and unclouded Evidences! I am sometimes tempted to fay, The Lord bath forfaken me my God hath forgotten me, Isa. 49. 14. O that he would feal to my Soul that precious Promise, I will never leave thee nor forfake thee, Heb. 13. 5. But my greatest Trouble arises from the Sense of mineown weakness, and bent to backslide, and I am sometimes ready to make that desperate Conclusion. I shall one Day perish by the Hand of Saul, I Sam. 27.1. O that I might have the Comfort of that Promife! Fer. 32. 40. I will put my Fear in their Hearts that they Shall not depart from me. There is in the Covenant of Grace, a Salve for every Sore, a Remedy for every Malady, Comforts suited to every Diffress and Sorrow; but that we may have the Benefit of them, 'tis requisite that we know every one his own fore, and his own Grief, as it is express'd. 2 Chron. 6. 29. that we may spread it before the Lord, and may apply to our selves that Relief which is proper for it, and from the Fulness which is in Jefus Christ may receive, and Grace for Grace. Grace for all Occasions, John 1. 16.

Here it may be of use to take Cognizance even of our outward Condition, and enquire into the Gares

and Burthens, the Crosses and Necessities of that : for even against those there is comfort provided in the New Covenant, and administred in this Ordinance. Godliness hath the Promise of the Life that now is: When Christ was inviting his Disciples to come and dine with him, he ask'd them first, Children, Have ye any Meat? John 21. 5, 12. Christ's Enquiry into our Affairs directs us to make known before him in particular the Trouble of them. Let every Care be cast upon the Lord in this Ordinance, lodg'd in his Hands, and left with him, and Het our own Spirits be eas'd of it, by the Application of that general Word of Comfort to this particular case, whatever it is. He careth for you. 1 Pet. 5. 7. What is the Concern I am most thoughtful about, relating to my felf, my Family, or Friends? let that way be committed to the Lord. and ro his wife and gracious Conduct and Difposal, and then let my Thoughts concerning it be. establish'd. What is the Complaint I make most feelingly? Is it of a fickly Body, disagreeable Relations, a declining Estate, the Removal of those by Death that were very dear? Whatever it is foread it before the Lord as Hezzekiah did Rab-Shakeh's Letter, 2 Kin. 19. 14. and allow no Complaint that is not fit to be spread before him. When God came to renew his Covenant with Abraham, and to tell him that he was his Shield and his exceeding great Reward, Abraham presently puts in Remonstrance of his Grievance, Behold to me thou haft given no Seed, Gen. 15. 1, 2, 3. Hannah did when the came up to worthip, I Sam. I. II. And we also must bring with us such a particular Sense of our Afflictions, as will enable us to receive and apply the Comforts here offer'd us, and no mores. Holy David observ'd how his House was with God, and that it was not made to grow, when he was taking the Comfort of this, that however ir it were, God had made with him an Everlasting Co-venant, 2 Sam. 23. 5.

Sixthly, Enquire, What shall I resolve to do? This Question is equivalent to that of Paul, Act. 9.6. Lord, What wilt thou have me to do? We come to this Ordinance solemnly to engage our selves against all Sin, and to all Dury, and therefore 'tis good to consider what that Sin is which we should particularly covenant against; and what that Duty which we should most expressly oblige our selves to. Tho' the general Covenant suffice to bind Conscience, yet a particular Article will be of use to mind Conscience, and to make the general Engagement the more effectual. It is good to be particular in our pious Resolutions, as well as in our penitent Reselections.

For our Affiliance herein, let us enquire,.

we have found our selves most assaulted by the Subtilty of the Tempter, and most exposed by our own Weakness, there we should strengthen our Defence, and double our Guard. What is the Sinthat hathmost easily beset me? Heb. 12. In the sit which I must more particularly resolve against in the strength of the Grace of God. What is the Duty I have most neglected, have been most backward to, and most careless in? To that I must most solemnly bind my Soul with this Bond.

glorifying God? What can I do in my place for the Service of God's Honour, and the Interests of his Kingdom among Men? The Liberal deviseth Liberal Things, and so the Pious deviseth Pious. Things, that he may both engage and excite him.

felf:

felf to those liberal pions things in and by this Ordinance. What is the Talent I am intrusted with the Improvement of? My Lord's Goods I ammade a Steward of. What is it that is expected from one in my Capacity? What Fruit is look'd for from me? That's it that I must especially have an Eye to in my Covenants with God; to that I must bind my Soul; for that I must fetch in help from Heaven, that having sworn, I may perform it.

CHAP. V.

Instructions for renewing our Covenant with God in our Preparation for this Ordinance.

IT is the wonderful Condescention of the God of Heaven, that he hath been pleas'd to deal with Man in the way of a Covenant, that on the one Hand we might receive strong Consolations from the Promises of the Covenant, which are very sweet and precious; and on the other Hand might ly under strong Obligations from the Conditions of the Covenant, which on this Account have greater Cogency in them than meer Precepts, that we our selves have consented to them, and that we have therein consulted our own Interest and Advantage.

The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper being a Seal of the Covenant, and the folemn exchanging of the Ratifications of it, 'tis necessary we make the Covenant before we pretend to feal it. In this Order therefore we must proceed, first give the Hand

to the Lord, and then enter into the fanctuary; first in secret consent to the Covenant, and then solemnly testify that Consent: This is like a Contract before Marriage. They that ask the way to Zion with their Faces thitherward, must join themselves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant, Fer. 50. 5. The Covenant is mutual, and in vain do we expect the Bleffings of the Covenant, if we be not truly willing to come under the Bonds of the Covenant. We must enter into Covenant with the Lord our God, and into his Oath, else he doth not establish us this Day for a People unto himself. Deut. 29. 12, 12. we are not own'd and accepted as God's People, tho' we come before him as his People come, and fit before him as his People fit, if we do not in fincerity avouch the Lord for our God, Deut. 26. 17, 18. In our Baptism this was done for us, in the Lord's Supper we must do it for our selves, else we do nothing.

Let us consider then in what method, and after what manner we must manage this great Trans-

action.

For the 1st. In what Method we must renew our Covenant with God in Christ, and by what steps we must proceed.

render'd our selves unworthy to be taken into Covenant with God. Those that would be exalted to this Honour must first humble themselves. God layeth his Beams in the Waters, Psal. 164. 3. The Foundations of Spiritual Joy are laid in the Waters of Penitential Tears. Therefore this sealing Ordinance sets them before us, which is proper to move that our Godly Sorrow; in it we look on him whom we have pierced, and if we do not mourn, and be not in bitterness for him, surely our Hearts are as hard as a Stone, yea, harder than a piece of the nether Missone, Zech.

Zeth. 12. 10. Those that join themselves to the Lord must go weeping to do it; so they did, Jer. 50. 4, 5. That Comfort is likely to last which takes rise from deep Humiliation, and Contrition of Soul for Sin. Those only that go forth weeping, bearing this precious Seed, shall come again rejoicing in God as theirs, and bringing the Sheaves of Covemant Blessings and Comforts with them, Psal. 126.5,6. Let us therefore begin with this.

1. We have reason to bewail our natural Estrangement from this Covenant: When we come to be for God, we have reason to be affected with Sorrow and Shame that ever we were for any other; that ever there should have been occasion for our Reconciliation to God, which supposeth that there had been a Quarrel. Wretch that I am, ever to have been a Stranger, an Enemy to the God that made me : at War with my Creator, and in League with the Rebels against his Crown and Dignity. O the Folly and Wickedness and Misery of my natural Estate! my first Father an Amorite, and my Mother a Hittite, and my felf a Transgressor from the Womb. alienated from the Life of God, and cast out in my Pollution. Nothing in me lovely, nothing amiable, but a great deal lothfome and abominable. Such as this was my Nativity, my Original, Ezek. 16. 3.

2. We have reason to bewail our backwardness to come into this Covenant. Well may we be asham'd to think how long God called and we refused, how oft he stretched forth his Hand before we regarded; how many Offers of Mercy we slighted, and how many kind Invitations we stood it out against: How long Christ stood at the Door and kneck dbefore we open'd to him; and how many frivolous Excuses we made to put off this necessary work. What a Fool was I to stand in mine own light so long?

How

How ungrateful to the God of Love, who waited to be gracious? How justly might I have been for ever excluded this Covenant, who so long neglected that great Salvation? Wherefore I abhor my

felf.

3. We have reason to bewail the Disagreeabieness of our Hearts and Lives to the Terms of this Covenant since first we profes'd our consent to it. In many Instances we have dealt foolithly, 'the well if we have not dealt falfly in the Covenant. In our Baptism we were given up to Christ to be bis, but we have liv'd as if we were our own; we then put on the Christian Livery, but we have done little of the Christian's Work; we were called by Christ's Name to take away our reproach? but how little have we been under the Conduct and Government of the Spirit of Christ? Since we became capable of acting for our felves, perhaps we have oft renew'd our Covenant with God, at his Table, and upon other Occasions, but we have despised the Oath, in breaking the Covenant, when lo we had given the Hand. Ezek. 17, 18. Our Performances have not anfwer'd the Engagements we have folemnly laid our felves under. Did we not fay, and fay it with the Blood of Christin our Hands, that we would be the faithful Servants of the God of Heaven? We did. and yet instead of serving God we have served divers lusts and Pleasures; we have made our selves Slaves to the Flesh, and Drudges to the World: and this bath been our manner from our Youth up. Did we not fay, We would not transgress, (Jer. 2.20.) we would not offend any more, (3ob 34.31.) We did, and yet our Transgressions are multiplied, and in many things we offend daily. Did we not say we would walk more closely with God, more circumspectly in our Conversation, we would be better in our Closets, better in our Families, better in our Callings, every way better? We did, and yet we are

still vain, and careless, and unprofitable; all those good Purposes have been to little Purpose: This is a Lamentation, and should be for a Lamentation. Let our Hearts be truly broken for our former Breach of Covenant with God, and then the Renewing of our Covenant will be the Recovery of our Peace, and that which was broken shall be bound up and made to rejoice.

Secondly, We must renounce the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, and every thing that stands in opposition to, or competition with the God to whom we join our selves by Covenant. If we will indeed deal sincerely in our covenanting with God, and would be accepted of him therein, our Covenant with Death must be disannull'd, and our Agreement with Hell must not stand, Isa. 28. 18. All these foolish finful Bargains, which were indeed null and void from the beginning, by which we had alienated our felves from our rightful Owner, and put our felves in possession of the Usurper, must be revok'd and cancell'd, and our Confent to them drawn back with Difdain and Abhorrence. When we take an Oath of Allegiance to God in Christ, as our rightful King and Soveraign, we must therein abjure the Tyranny of the Rebellious and Rival Powers. O Lord our God, other Lords besides thee have had Dominion over us, while Sin hath reign'd in our mortal Bodies, in our immortal Souls, and every Luft hath been a Lord, but now we are weary of that heavy Yoke, and thro' God's Grace it shall be so no longer, for from henceforth, by thee only will we make mention of thy Name, Isa. 26. 13.

The Covenant we are to enter into is a Marriage Covenant, thy Maker is to be thy Husband, Isa. 54. 5. and thou art to be betrothed to him, Hos. 2. 19. and it is the ancient and fundamental Law of that Covenant, that all other Loves be

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renounc'd, all other Beloved Ones forfaken; and the same is the Law of this Covenant; Hos. 3. 3. Thou shalt not be for another man, so will I also be for shee: Quitting all others we must cleave to the Lord only: Lovers and crowned Heads will not endure Rivals: On these Terms and no other we may covenant with God. 1 Sam. 7. 3. If ye do return unto the Lord with all your Hearts, then put away the strange Gods, and Ashraroth, else it is not a Return to God.

- I. We must renounce all Subjection to Satan's Rule and Government. Satan's Seat must be overturn'd in our Hearts, and the Redeemer's Throne fer up there upon the Ruins of it. We must difclaim the Devil's Power over us, cast off that Iron Yoke, and resolve to be deceived by him no more, and led Captive by him at his Will no more. We must quit the Service of the Citizen of that Country, and feed his Swine no longer, feed upon his Husks no. more, that we may return to our Father's House, where there is Bread enough and to spare. We must renounce the treacherous Conduct of the Evil Spirit, that we may put our selves under the gracious Guidance of the holy and good Spirit. All that turn to God must turn from the Power of Satan. Act. 26. 18. for what Communion hath Christ with Belial? Our Covenant with God engageth us in a War with Satan, for the Controversy between them is such as will by no means allow us to stand neuter.
- 2. We must renounce all Compliance with the Wills and Interests of the Flesh. The Body, the near and dear to the Soul, yet must not be allow'd to have Dominion over it. The Liberty, Soveraignty, and Honour of the Immortal Spirit, by which we are ally'd to the upper World, that World of Spirits must be afferted, vindicated, and

maintain'd against the Usurpation and Encroachments of the Body, which is of the Earth earthly, and by which we are allyed to the Beafts that perish. The Elder too long hath serv'd the Younger, the Nobler hath serv'd the Baser, 'tis time that the Yoke should be broken from off its Neck, and that that part of the Man should rule under Christ, whose right it is. The Servants on Horse-back must be dismounted, the Lusts of the Flesh deny'd, and its Wills no longer admitted to give Law to the Man, and the Princes which have walk'd like Servants upon the Earth, must be rais'd from the Dunghill, and made to inherit the Throne of Glory, the Dictates (I mean) of right Reason, guided by Revelation, and confulting the true Interests of the better part, must have the commanding Sway and Empire in us (Eccl. 10. 7. 1 Sam. 2. 8.) We must never more make it our chief Good to have the Flesh pleas'd, and the Desires of it gratified; nor ever make it our chief Business to make Provision for the Fiesh, that we may fulfil the Lusts of it. Away with them, away with them; crucify them, crucify them, for like Barrabbas, they are Robbers, they are Murtherers, they are Enemies to our Peace; we will not have them to reign over us, No, no, we know them too well; we have no King but Fefus.

3. We must renounce all Dependance upon this present World, and conformity to it. If we enter into a covenant which ensures us a Happiness in tother World, on which we look with a Holy Concern, we must disclaim the Expectations of a Happiness in this World, and therefore look upon this with a Holy Contempt. God and Mammon, God and Gain, these are contrary the one to the other, so that if we will be found loving God and cleaving to him, we must dispise the World, and set loose to that, Mat. 6. 24. We must so far renounce the Way of the

the World, as not to govern our selves by that, and take our Principles and Measures from it; for we must not be conformed to this World, Rom. 12. 2. nor walk according to the Course of it, Eph. 2. 2. We must so far renounce the Men of the World as not to incorporate our selves with them, nor chuse them for our People, because tho' we are in the World we are not of the World, nor have we received the Spirit of the World, but Christ hath chofen and call'd us out of it, John 15. 19. We must fo far renounce the Wealth of the World, as not to portion our selves out of it, nor lay up our Treasure in it; not to take up with the Things of this World as our good things, Luk. 16. 25. as our Confolation, Luk. 6. 24. as our Reward, Mat. 6. 2. as the Penny we agreefor, Mat. 20. 13. for in God's Favour is our Life, and not in the Smiles of this World. The Lord make us cordial in thus renouncing these Competitors, that we may be found fincere in covenanting with God in Christ.

Thirdly, We must receive the Lord Jesus Christ as he is offer'd to us in the Gospel. In renewing our Covenants with God, it is not enough to enter our Diffent from the World and the Flesh, and to shake off Satan's Yoke, but we must enter our Confent to Christ, and take upon us his Yoke. In the Everlasting Gospel, both as it is written in the Scripture, and as it is feal'd in this Sacrament, Salvation by Christ, that great Salvation is fairly tender'd to us, to us who need it, and are undone for ever without it; we then come into covenant with God when we accept of this Salvation, with an intire Complacency and Confidence in those Methods which infinite Wisdom hath taken of reconciling a guilty and obnoxious World to himfelf, by the Mediation of his own Son, and a chearful Compliance with those Methods for our felves, felves, and our own Salvation. Lord I take thee at thy Word; be it unto thy Servant according to that Word, which is so well order'd in all things, and fo sure.

We must accept the Salvation in Christ's Way, and upon his Terms, else our Acceptance is not ac-

cepted.

1. By the hearty Consent to the Grace of Christ. we must accept the Salvation in his own way, in such a way as for ever excludes bonsting, humbles Man. to the Dust, and will admit no Flesh to glory in his Presence: such a way as tho' it leave the Blood of them that perish upon their own Heads, yet lays, all the Crowns of them that are saved at the Feet of Free Grace. This Method we must approve of, and love this Salvation, not going about to establish our own righteousness, as if by pleading, Not Gully, we could answer the Demands of the Covenant of Innocency, and so be justify'd and sav'd by that, but submitting to the righteougness of God, by Faith. Rom. 10. 3. All the Concerns that lie between us and God we must put into the Hands of the Lord Jesus, as the great Mediator, the great Manager; we must be content to be nothing, that the Lord alone may be exalted, and Christ may be all in all. God hath declar'd more than once by a Voice from Heaven, This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: To consent to Christ's Grace and accept of Salvation in his way, is to eccho back to that folemn Declaration, This is my beloved Saviour, in whom I am well pleased: The Lord be wellpleased with me in him, for out of him I can expect no favour.

2. By a hearty Consent to the Government of Christ, we must accept the Salvation in his own Terms. When we receive Christ, we must receive an invite Christ, for, Is Christ divided? a Christ

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to fanctify and rule us, as well as a Christ to justify and fave us; for he is a Priest upon his Throne, and the Counsel of Peace is between them both, Zech. 6.12. What God has join'd together, let not us think to put afunder. He saves his People from their Sins. not in their Sins; and is the Author of Eternal Redemption to those only that obey him. That very Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly and fleshly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this World. Tit. 2. 11, 12. Life and Peace are to, be had on these Terms, and on no other; and are we willing to come up to these Terms? Will we receive Christ and his Law as well as Christ and his Love? Christ and his Cross as well as Christ and his Crown? Lord, I will, faith the Believing Soul: Lord, I do: My Beloved is mine and I am his, to all . the Intents and Purposes of the Covenant.

Fourthly, We must resign and give up our selves to God in Christ. God in the Covenant makes over not only his Gifts and Favours, but himself to us. [I will be to them a God] what he is in himself he will be to us, a God All-fufficient; fo we in the Covenant must offer up not only our Services, but our selves, our own selves, our whole selves, Body, Soul, and Spirit, to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, according to the Obligations of our Baptism, as those that are bound to be to him a People. This Surrender is to be folemnly made at the Lord's Table, and seal'd there, it must therefore be prepar'd and made ready before. Let us fee to it that it be carefully drawn up, without exception or limitation, and the Heart examin'd whether a free and full Confent be given to it. We must first give our own selves unto the Lord, 2 Cor: 8. 5. and I know not how we can dispose of our selves better. By the Mercies of God which are inviting, and very

very encouraging we must be wrought upon to present our Bodies and Souls to God a living Sacrifice of Acknowledgment, not a dying Sacrifice of Atonement, which if it be boly, shall be acceptable, and it is our reasonable Service, Rom. 12. 1. Thus he that covenants with God is directed to fay, I am the Lord's, and for the greater Solemnity of the Transaction, to Subscribe with his Hand to the Lord. Isa. 44. 5. Not that we do, or can hereby transfer or convey to God any Right to us which he had not before: He is our absolute Lord and Owner, and hath an uncontestable Soveraignty over us, and Propriety in us, as he is our Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, and Redeemer: But hereby we recognize and acknowledge his Right tous. We are bu already by Obligation, more his than our own: But that we may have the Benefit and Comfort of being so, we must be his by our own consent. More particularly.

1. To refign our selves to God is to dedicate and devote our selves to his Praise. 'Tis not enough to call our selves by his Name, and herd our selves among those that do so, to take away our reproach, but we must consecrate our selves to his Name, as Living Temples. Corban, It is a Gift, a Gift to God, all I am, all I have, all I can do is so; 'tis a dedicated thing, which it is facriledge to alienate. All the Powers and Faculties of our Souls, all the Parts and Members of our Bodies we must, as those that are alive from the dead, freely yield unto God as Instruments of righteousness, to be us'd and employ'd in his Service, for his Glory, Rom. 6. 13, Allour Endowments, all our Attainments, all those things we call Accomplishments, must be accounted as Talents, which we must trade with for his Honour. All being of him and from him, all must be to him and for him. Our Tongues must not be our own but his, in nothing to offend him, but to speak his Praise, and plead his Cause, as there is Occasion: Our time not our own, but as a Servant's time, to be spent according to our Master's Directions, and some way or other to our Master's Glory, every day being in this Sense our Lord's Day : Our Estates not our own, to be spent or spard by the Direction of our Lusts, but to be used as God directs; God must be honour'd mithour substance, Prov. 3. 9. and our Merchandise and our Hire must be Holiness to the Lord, Ifa. 23. 18. Our Interests not our own, with it to seek our own Glory, but to be improv'd in feeking and ferving God's Glory: That is, God's Glory must be fix'd and aim'd at as our highest and ultimate End, in all the Care we take about our Employments, and all the Comfort we take in our Enjoyments. As good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God, we must have this still in our Eye, That God in all things may be glorified through Jefus Chrift, 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11. By rhis pious Intention common Actions must be Santified, and done after a Godly fort, 3 John 6. our giving up of our selves to be to God a People, is thus explain'd, Fex. 13. 11. it is, to be to him, for a Name, and for a Praise, and for a Glory.

2. To refign our selves to God is to subject and submit our selves to his Power; To the sanctifying Power of his Law, and the disposing Power of his Law, and the disposing Power of his Providence; Such as this is the Subjection we must consent to, and it hath in it so much of Priviledge and Advantage, as well as Duty and Service, that we have

no reason to stumble at it.

(1). We must submit our selves to the fanttifying Power of God's Spirit. We must lay our Souls as soft Wax under this Seal, to receive the Impressions of it, as white Paper under this Pen, that it reay

may write the Law there. Whereas we have refifted the Holy Ghoft, quenched his Motions, and Ariven against him when he hath been striving with us, we must now yield our selves to be led and influenc'd by him, with full purpose of Heart in every thing to follow his Conduct, and com-ply with him. When Christ in his Gospel breaths on us, faying, Receive ye the Holy Ghoft, (John 20.22.) my Heart must answer, Lord I receive him, I bid him welcome into my Heart, tho he come as a Spirit of Judgment and a Spirit of Burning, as a Refiner's Fire, and Fuller's Soap, yet bleffed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord. Let him come and mortify my Lusts and Corruptions, I do not defire that any of them should be spard; let them die, let them die by the Sword of the Spirit, Agag himself not excepted, the he comes delicately. Let every Thought within me, even the inward Thought, (Pfal. 49: 11.) be brought into Captivity to the Obedince of Christ, 2 Cor. 10. 1 Let the Bleffed Spirit do his whole Work in me, and fulfil it with an Almighty Power.

(2.) We must submit our selves to the Commanding Power of God's Law: The Law as it is in the Hand of the Mediator, is God's Instrument of Government; if I yield my felf to him as a Subfost, I must in every thing be observant of, and obedient to that Law, and now I covenant to be fo; in all my ways to walk according to that Rule. All my Thoughts and Affections, all my Words and Actions shall be under the Direction of the Divine Law, and subject to its Check and Restrains. God's Judgment will I lay before me, and have respect to all his Commandments; by them I will be always ral'd, over-ral'd. Let the Word of the Lord come (as a good Man once faid) and if I bad fix hundred Necks, I would bow them all to the Auobority of it. Whatever appears to me to be my Duty, Duty, by the Grace of God I will do it, how much soever it interfere with my secular Interest; whatever appears to me to be a Sin, by the Grace of God, I will avoid it, and refrain from it, how strong soever my corrupt Inclination may be to it. All that the Lord shall say to me I will do, and will be obedient.

(3.) We must submit our selves to the Disposing Power of God's Providence. This must be the Rule of our Patience and Passive Obedience, as the former of our Practise and Active Obedience. All my Affairs relating to this Life, I chearfully submit to the Divine Disposal; let them be directed and determin'd as infinite Wisdom sees fit, and I will acquiesce. Let the Lord save my Soul, and then as to every thing else, let him do with me and. mine as feemeth good unto him; I will never find fault with any thing that God doth. Not as I will but as thou wilt; I know I have no Wisdom of my own; Im'e a Fool if I lean to my own Understanding and therefore Il'e have no Will of my own : Father, thy Will be done. The Health of my Body, the Success of my Calling, the Prosperity of my Estate, the Agreeableness of my Family, the Continuance of my Comforts, and the Issue of any particular Concern my Heart is upon, I leave in the Hands of my Heavenly Father, who knows what is good for me better than I do for my felf: If in any of these I be cross'd, by the Grace of God I will submit withour murmuring or disputing: All is well that God doth, and therefore welcome the Will of God in every Event. While he is mine, and I am his, nothing shall come amiss to me.

Fifthly, We must resolve to abide by it as long as we live, and to live up to it. In our Covenanting with God, there must be not only a present Confent, Lord I do take thee for mine, I do give up my

self to thee to be thine; but this must be riperid into a Resolution for the future, with purpose of beart to cleave unto the Lord, Act. 11, 23. We must Lay hold on Wisdom, so as to retain her, Prov. 3. 18. and chuse the way of Truth so as to stick to it, Psal. 119. 30, 31. The Nail in the Holy Place, (Ezr. 8. 9.) must be well clenchid, that it may be a Nail in a sure place, Isa. 22.23. Many a Pang of good Affections, and many a hopeful turn of good Inclinations comes to nothing for want of Resolution. 'Tis said of Rehoboam, 2 Chron. 12. 14. that he did evil, because he prepar'd not, or, he fix'd not his heart (so the word is in the Phrase) to seek the Lord: The Heart that is unfix'd is unprepar'd. Jossua took Pains with the People to bring them up to that noble Resolution, Josh. 24. 21. Nay, but we will ferve the Lord, and we should not be content till we also are in like manner refolv'd, and firmly fix'd for God and Duty, for Christ and Heaven. This is the Preparation of the Gofpel of Peace, wherewith our Fees must be shod. Eph. 6. 15.

Let us enquire what that Resolution is, which in an intire Dependance upon the Grace of Christ, we should come up to in our covenanting with God.

1. We must come up to such a settled Resolution as doth not reserve a Power of Revocation for our selves. The Covenant is in it self a perpetual Covenant, and as such we must consent to it, not as Servants hire themselves for a Year, or to be free at a Quarter's Warning; not as Apprentices bind themselves for seven Years, to be discharged at the expiring of that Term; but it must be a Covenant for Life, a Covenant for Eternity, a Covenant never to be forgetten, and in this beyond even the

Marriage Covenant, for that is made with this Proviso, till Death us do part; but Death it self must not part us and Christ. Our Covenant must be made like that Servant's who lov'd bis Master, and would not go out free; our Ears must be nail'd to God's Door-post, and we must resolve to serve him for ever, Exod. 21.5, 6. A Power of Revocation reserved is a Deseasance of the Covenant; it's no Bargain if it be not for a Perpetuity, and if we

consent not to put it past recal.

Let not those that are young, and under Tutors and Governours, think to discharge themselves of these Obligations when they come to be of age, and to put them off with their Childish Things; No, you must resolve to adhere to it, as Moses did, when you come to Tears, Heb. 11. 24. As Children are not too little, so grown People are not too big to be religious. You must resolve to live under the Bonds of this Covenant, when you come to live of your selves, to be at your own Dispose, and to lanch out never so far into this World. Your greatest Engagements in Care and Business cannot disengage you from these. Whatever State of Life you are call'd to, you must resolve to take your Religion with you into it.

Let not those who are in the midst of their: Days think it possible or desireable to out-live the binding force of this Covenant. If now we ser out in the Way we should go, it must be with a Refolution if we live to be old, how wise and honourable soever old Age be, yet then we will not depart from it, Prov. 22. 6. as knowing that the hoary bairs are then only a Crown of Glory when they are found (as having been long before fixed) in the

way of righteousness, Prov. 16. 31.

2. We must come up to such a strong Resolution as will not yield to the Power of Temptation from the Enemy. When we engage our selves for God, we

engage our selves against Satan, and must expect his utmost Essorts to oppose us in our way, and to draw us out of it. Against these Designs we must therefore arm our selves, resolving to stand in the evil day, and having done all, in God's Name to stand our Ground, Eph. 6. 13. Saying to all that which would either divert or deter us from prosecuting the Choice we have made, as Ruth did to Naomi, when she was stedsastly resolv'd, Ruth 1.16. Intreat me not to leave Christ, or to turn from following after him, for whither he goes I will follow him, tho' it be in Banishment; where he lodges I will lodge with him, tho' it be in a Prison, for Death it self shall never part us:

We must resolve by God's Grace never to be so elevated or enamor'd with the Smiles of the World, as by them to be allur'd from the Paths of serious Godliness, for our Religion will be both the Sasety and the Honour of a prosperous Condition, and will sanctify and sweeten all the Comforts of it

to us.

And we must in like manner resolve never to be so discouraged and disheartned by the Frowns of the World, as by the Force of them to be rob'd of our Joy in God, or by the Fear of them to be driven from our Duty to God. We must come to Christ with a steddy Resolution to abide by him all Weathers: Lord I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. The I should do with thee yet will I not deny thee. None of these things move me.

Sixthly, We must rely upon the Righteonsness and Strength of our Lord Jesus in all this. Christ is the Mediator of this Peace, and the Guarrantee of it, the Surety of this better Covenant that blessed Days-man, which bath laid his Hand upon us both, who hath so undertaken for God, that in him all God's Promises to us Yea and are Amen, 2 Cor. 1.20. and unless

unless he undertake for us too, how can our Promises to God have any Strength or Stability in them? When therefore we enter into Covenant with God, our Eye must be to Christ as the Alpha and Omega of that Covenant. When God had fworn by himfelf that unto him every Knee should bow. and every Tongue should swear, Isa. 45. 23. immediately it follows, verse 24. Surely shall one fay, every one that bows and fwears to God, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength; In the Lord Jefus is all my Sufficiency for the doing of this well. In making and renewing our Covenant with God, we must take Instructions from that of David, Pfal. 71. 16. I will go in the strength of the Lord God ; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.

God for Assistance, and for the working of all our Works in us and for us. In that strength we must go, go forth and go on, as those that know we can do nothing that is good of our selves, our own hands are not sufficient for us, but we can do all things thro Christ strengthning us, Phil. 4. 13. Our Work then goes on, and then only when we are strengthned with all mightby his Spirit. This way we must look for Spiritual Strength as Nehemiah, chap. 6. 9. Now therefore O God strengthen my hands. On this Strength we must stay our selves, in this Strength we must engage our selves, and put forth our selves, and with it we must encourage our selves.

We cannot make this Covenant but in the Strength of Christ; not make it at all; Nature, corrupt Nature, inclines to the World and the Flesh, and cleaves to them; without the Influences of special Grace, we should never move towards. God, much less resolve for him: We cannot do

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dance upon that. If like Peter we venture on our own sufficiency, and use those Forms of Speech which import a Reliance on the Divine Grace, only as Words of Course, and do not by Faith trust to that Grace, and derive from it, we forseit the Aids of it, our Covenant is rejected as Presumptious, and shall not avail us. Promises made in our own strength betray us, and do not

help us, like the House built on the Sand.

We cannot keep this Covenant, when it is made, but in the Strength of Christ: For we stand no longer than he by his Grace upholds us; we go no further than he by his Grace not only leads us but caries us. His Promises to us are our Security. not ours to him; from his Fulness therefore we must expect to receive Grace for Grace; for it is not in our felves, nor is it to be had any where but in him. We then that are Principals in the Bond, knowing our felves infolvant, must put himin as Surery for us: He is willing to fland; and without him our Bond will not be taken; we are too well known to be trusted, for all Men are Lians; and the Heart is deceitful above all things. Go to Christ therefore with that Address, Pfal. 119. 122. Be Surety for thy Servant for good. 1/a. 38. 14. I am oppressed, undertake for me.

2. We must depend upon the Righteousness of Christ, making mention of that, even of that only, for Acceptance with God in our Covenanting with him. We have nothing in us to recommend us to God's Favour, no Righteousness of our own wherein to appear before him; we have by Sin not only forfeited all the Bleisings of the Covenant, but incapacitated our selves for Admission into it; By Sacrifice therefore, by a Sacrifice of Atonement, sufficient to expiate our Guilt, and satisfy the Demands of injur'd Justice, we must make a Covenant.

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with God. And there is none such but that one Offering by which Christ hath perfected for ever them which are sanctified. That's the Blood of the Covenant, which must be sprinkled upon our Consciences, when we join our selves to the Lord, Exod. 24. 8. That Everlasting Righteousness which Messiah the Prince has brought in, must be the Cover of our Spiritual Nakedness, our Wedding Garment to adorn our Nuptials, and the Foundation on which we must build all our Hopes to find Favour in the fight of the Lord.

I shall not here draw up a Form of Covenanting with God, both because such may be found drawn up by far better Hands than mine, as Mr. Baxter's, Mr. Allen's, and others, and because a Judicious Christian may out of the foregoing Heads easily.

draw up one for himfelf...

For the 2d thing; After what manner we must renew our Covenant with God, that we may therein please God, and experience the good Effect of it in our own Souls.

vill produce lame Performances, and can never be acceptable to the Seeing God: Ignorance is not the Mother of this Devotion: Satan indeed puts out Men's Eyes, and so brings them into Bondage to him, and leads them blind-fold; for he is a Thief and a Robber that comes not in by the Door, but elimbeth up some other way; and therefore to him we must not open: But the Grace of God takes the regular way of dealing with reasonable Creatures; opening the Understanding first, and then bowing the Will; this is entring in by the Door, as the Shepherd of the Sheep doth, John 10 1, 2. In this Method therefore we must see that the Work be done. We must first acquaint our selves with the Tener

of the Covenant, and then consent to the Terms of it. Moses read the Book of the Covenant in the Audience of the People, Exod. 24. 7. and then sprinkled upon them the Blood of the Cevenant, ver. 8. And we must take the same Method; first peruse the Articles, and then sign them. That Faith which is without Knowledge, is not the Faith of God's Elect.

2. We must do it considerately: We need not take time to confider whether we should do it or no. the Matter is too plain to bear that Debate; but we must seriously consider what we do, when we go about it. Let it be done with a folemn Paufe, fuch as Moses put Israel upon when he said. Deut. 29. 10, 12. Te stand this Day all of you before the Lord your God -- that thou should'st enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his Oath. Consider how weighty the Transaction is, that it may be manag'd with due Serionineis, and of what consequence it is, that it be done well; for 'tis to be hop'd, that if it be once well done, it is done for ever. We must sit down and count the cost, consider the Restraints this Covenant will put upon the Flesh, the Loss and Expence we may sustain by our Adherence to it, the Hazzards we run, and the Difficulties we must reckon upon if we will be faithful unto Death, and in the view of these consent to the Covenant, that hereafter when Tribulation and Persecution ariseth because of the Word, we may not fay, This was what we did not think of. Do it deliberately therefore, and then it will not be easily undone. The Rule in Vowing is, Be not rash with thy Mouth, neither let they Heart be hafty to utter any thing before God. Eccl. 5. 2. It is the Character of the Virtuous Woman, that the confiders a Field and buys it. And it hath been thought a Dictate of Prudence, tho'. it feem a Paradox, Take time, and you will have done

the fooner. Many that without Confideration, have put on a Profession, when the Wind hath turn'd, have in like manner without Confideration, thrown it off again: Light come, Light go. Those therefore that herein would prove themselves here.

nest, must prove themselves wife.

3. We must do it humbly : When we come to covenant with God, we must remember what we are, and who he is with whom we have to do. that the Familiarity we are graciously admitted to. may not beget a Contempt of God, or a Conceit of our selves; but rather the more God is pleas'd to exale us, and condescend to us, the more we must bonour him, and abase our selves. Abraham fell on his Face in a deep sense of his own unworthines. then when God faid, I will make my Covenant between me and thee, and began to talk with him concerning it, Gen. 17. 2, 3. And afterwards when he was admitted into an intimate Communion with God, pursuant to that Covenant, he drew near as one that knew his Distance, expressing himself with wonder at the Favour done him. Gen. 18. 27. Behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but Dust and Ashes. When the Covenant of Royalty was confirm'd to David, and God regarded him according to the Estate of a Man of high Degree, he lets down as one aftonish'd at the Honour confer'd on him, and humbly expresseth himself thus, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine House, that thou hast brought me hitherto? 2 Chron. 17. 16, 17. Thus must wee fam caft our felves down at the Footfool of God's Throne if we would be taken up into the Embraces of his Love. He that humbles himfelf (ball be exalted; si that begged that is, thether

4. We must do it obearfully, for here in a special manner, God loves a chearful Giver, and is pleas'd with that which is done, not of constrains but willingly. In our covenanting with God, we must not be acted by a Spirit of Bondage and Fear, but by a. Spirit of Adoption, a Spirit of Power and Love, and a found mind, Rom. 8. 15. 2. Tim. 1. 7. We must join our selves to the Lord, not only because it is our Duty, and that which we are bound to, but because it is our Interest, and that which we shall be unspeakable Gainers by; not with Reluctancy and Regret, and with a half-confent extorted from us, but with an intire Satisfaction, and the full: consent of a free Spirit. Let it be a Pleasure to us. to think of our Interest in God as ours, and our Engagement to him as his; a Pleasure to us to think of the Bonds of the Covenant, as well as of the Bleffings of the Covenant. Much of our Communion with God (which is fo much the Delight: of all that are Sanctified) is kept up by the frequent Recognition of our Covenant with him, which we should make as those that like our Choice too well to change; and as the Men of Judah did when they swear unto the Lord with a loud Voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets; and all Judab rejoiced at the oath; for they had sworn with all their beart, and Sought him with their whole defire. 2 Chron. 15. 14, 15. Christ's Souldiers must be Voluntiers, not press'd Men, and we must repeat our consent to him with such Joy and Triumph, as appears in that of the Spoule, Cant. 5. 16. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend.

thing required in every thing wherein we have to do with God; Behold, be desires Truth in the inward parts. When God took Abraham into Covenant with himself, this was the Charge he gave him, walk before me and be thou perfect, that is, upright, for Uprightness is our Gospel Perfection. Writing the Covenant and subscribing it, signing and staling it, may be proper Expressions of Seriousness.

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and Resolution in the Transaction, and of use to us in the Review ; But if herein we ly unto God with our Mouth, and flatter him with our Tongue, as: Ifrael did. Pfal. 78. 36. tho' we may put a cheat upon our selves and others, yet we cannot impose: upon him ; Be not deceived, God is not mocked. If we only give the Hand unto the Lord, and do nor. give our Hearts to him, whatever our Pretenfions. Professions, and present Pangs of Devotion may be, we are but as a founding Brass and a rinkling. Cymbal. What will it avail us to fay, we Covenant with God, if we still keep our League with the World and the Flesh, and have a secret Antipathy to serious Godliness? Diffembeld Piety is no Disguise before God, but is hated as Double Iniquity. 'Tis certain, Thou hast no part nor lot in the matter (whatever thou may'ft claim) if thy Heart be not right in the fight of God, 148t. 8.21. Iknow no Religion but Sincerity: Our Vows to God are nothing, if they be not Bonds upon the Soul.

CHAP. VI.

Helps for Meditation and Prayer in our Preparation for the Ordinance.

Meditation and Prayer are the daily Exercise and Delight of a devout and pious Soul In Meditation we converse with our selves; in Prayer we converse with God; and what Converse can we desire more agreeable, and more advantagious? They who are frequent and serious in these Holy Duties at other times, will find them the easier, and the sweeter on this Occasion; the Friends we are much with, we are most free with: But

if at other times we be not so close and constant to them as we should be, we have the more need to take Pains with our own Hearts, that we may effectually engage them in these Services, when we approach the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

Enter into thy Closet therefore, and Shut the Door of that against Diversions from without: Be not thy of being alone. The Power of Godliness withers and declines, if secret Devotion be either neglected or negligently perform'd. Enter into thy Heart alfo, and do what thou can't to Shut the Doors of that against Distraction from within. Compose thy felf for Bufiness, and summon all that is within thee to attend on it; fepárate thy felf from the Word and the Thoughts of it: Leave all its Cares at the bottom of the Hill, as Abraham did his Servants when he was going up into the Mount to worship God, Gen. 22. 5. and then feethy felf about thy Work; gird up thy Loins, and trim thy Lamps. Up, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee:

I. We must set our selves to Medicate on that which is most proper for the confirming of our Faith, and the kindling of pious and devout Assections in us. Good Thoughts should be often our Minds, and welcome there; so should our Souls oft breathetowards God in pious Ejaculations that are short and sudden: But as good Prayers, so good Thoughts must sometimes be set, and solemn; Morning and Evening they must be so, on Lord's Days also, and before the Lord's Supper.

Meditation is Thought engaged, and Thought enflamed.

1. It is Thought engag'd: In it the Heart fastens upon, and fixes to a select and certain Subject with

an Endeavour to dwell and enlarge upon it : not matters of doubtful Disputation, or small concern, but those things that are of greatest Certainty and Moment: And fince few of the Ordinary fort of Christians can be suppos'd to have such a Treasury of Knowledge, such a fruitfulness of Invention, and so great a Compass and Readiness of Thought. as to be able to discourse with themselves for any time upon any one Subject, fo closely, methodically, and pertinently as one would wish; it may be adviseable, either to fasten upon some Portion of Scripture, and to read that over and over, with a closeness of Observation and Application; or to recollect some profitable Sermon lately heard, and think that over; or to make use of some Books of Pious Meditations, or Practical Discourfes (which bleffed be God, we have great plenty and variety of in our own Tongue) and not only read them, but descant and enlarge upon them in our Minds, still giving Liberty to our own Thoughts to expatiate, as they are able; but borrowing help from what we read, to reduce them when they wander, refresh them when they tire, and to furnish them with matter when they are barren. In the choice of Helps for this Work, Wifdom and Experience are profitable to direct, and no Rule can be given to fit all Capacities and all Cases: The End may be attain'd in different Methods.

2. It is Thought enflam'd. To Meditate, is not only to think feriously of Divine Things, but to think of them with concern and suitable Affection. While we are thus musing, the fire must burn, Pfal. 39. 3. When the Heart meditates Terrour, (Isa. 33. 18.) the Terrours of the Lord, it must be with a Holy Fear; when we contemplate the Beauty of the Lord, his Bounty, and his Benignity, which is better than Life, we must do it with a Holy Complacency, solacing our selves in the Lord our

our God: The Design of Meditation is to improve our Knowledge, and to affest our selves with those things with which we have acquainted our selves, that the Impressions of them upon our Souls, may be deep and durable, and that by beholding the Glory of the Lord, we may be changed into the same

Image.

Serious Meditation before a Sacrament will be of great use to us, to make those things familiar to us, which in that Ordinance we are to be conversant with: That Good Thoughts may not be to seek when we are there, it is our Wisdom to prepare them, and lay them ready beforehand. Frequent Acts confirm a Habit; and Pious Dispositions are greatly help'd by Pious Meditations. Christian Graces will be the better exercis' in the Ordinance, when they are thus train'd and disciplin'd, and

drawn out in our Preparation for it.

For our Assistance herein, I shall mention some few of those things which may most properly be pitch'd upon for the Subject of our Meditations before a Sacrament: I say, before a Sacrament, because tho' this be calculated here for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, yet it may equally serve us in our Preparations for the other Sacrament, both that we may profit by the publick Administration of it, and especially that we may in an acceptable manner, present our Children to it; for which Service we have as much need carefully to prepare our selves for this. As we must in Faith join our selves to the Lord, so we must in Faith dedicate those Pieces of our selves to him.

That our Hearts then may be rais'd and quicken'd, and prepar'd for Communion with Christ at his. Table,

First, Let us set our selves to think of the Sinfulness and Misery of Man's fallen State. That we may be taught to value our Recovery and Restoration by the Grace of the Second Adam, let us take a full and distinct view of our Ruin by the Sin of the First Adam; come and see what Desolations it hath made on the Earth, and how it hath turn'd the World into a Wilderness. How is the Gold become dim, and the most sine Gold changed? What wretched Work did Sin make? What a black and horrid Train of fatal Consequences attended its Entrance is to the World.

Come my Soul, and fee how the Nature of Man is corrupted and vitiated, and lamentably degenerated from its Primitive Purity and Rectifude: God's Image defaced and loft, and Satan's Image stamp'd instead of it. The understanding Blind. and unapt to admit the Rays of the Divine Light; the will flubborn, and unapt to comply with the Dictates of the Divine Law; the Affections carnal, and unapt to receive the Impressions of the Divine Love. Come, my Soul, and lament the Change, for thou thy felf feelest from it, and sharest in the fad Effects of it; for a Nature thus tainted, thus. deprav'd I brought into the World with me, and carry about with me to this Day, sad Remainders of its Corruption. 'Twas a Nature by Creation: little lower than that of Angels, but become by Sin much baser than that of Brutes. 'Twas like the Nazarites, Purer than snow, whiter than milk, more ruddy than the rubies, and its polishing was of Sapphires. but now its visage is blacker than a Cole, Lam. 4.7,8. Never was Beauty fo deform'd, never was Strength fo weaken'd, never was a healthful Constitution fo spoil'd, never was Honour so laid in the Dust. How is the faithful City become a Harlot? Man's. Nature was planted a choice wine, wholly a right feed, but alas, it is become the degenerate Plant of a strange Vine.

Vine, Jer. 2. 21. I find it in my self by sad Experience; I am naturally prone to that which is evil, and backward to that which is good. Foolifbness is daily breaking out in my Life, and by that I perceive, it is bound up in my Heart: For these things I blush, and am ashamed: For these things I tremble and am asraid: For these things I weep, mine Eye, mine Eye runs down with Tears, Lam. 1: 16.

Come my Soul, and fee how miserable Fallen-Man is, see him excluded God's Favour, expell'd the Garden of the Lord, and forbidden to meddle with the Tree of Life: See how odious he is become to God's Holiness, and obnoxious to his Juflice, and by nature a Child of Wrath. See how calamitous the State of Humane Life is; what Troops of Diseases, Disasters, and Deaths in the most horrid and frightful Shapes Man is compass'd: about with; Lord, how are they increased that trouble him? See him attack'd on every fide by the malignant Powers of Darkness that seek to destroy: fee him sentenc'd for Sin to utter Darkness, to the devouring Fire, to the Everlasting Burning? How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, Son of the Morning? O what a Gulph of Misery is Man sunk into by Sin; separated from all Good to all Evil; and his Condition in himself Helpless and Hopeless. A deplorable Case! And 'tis my Case by Nature: I am of this guilty, expos'd, condemn'd Race; undone, undone for ever, as miscrable as the Curse of Heaven and the Flames of Hell can make me, if infinite Mercy do not interpose. And shall not this affect me? shall not this afflict me? shall not these Thoughts beget in me a harred of Sin that evil. that only evil? shall I ever be reconcil'd to that which hath done so much Mischief? Shall I not be quicken'd hereby to fly to Christ, in whom alone Help and Salvation is to be had? Is this thy Condition

dition, O my Soul, thine by Nature, and is there a Door of Hope open'd to thee by Grace? Up, then, get thee out of this Sodom; escape for thy Life, look not behind thee, stay not in all the Plain, escape to the Mountain, the Mountain of Holiness, lest thou be consumed.

Secondly, Let us set our selves to think of the Glery of the Divine Attributes shining forth in the Work of our Redemption and Salvation. Here's a bright and noble Subject, the Contemplation and Wonder of Angels and blessed Spirits above, and which Eternity it self will be short enough to be

spent in the admiring View of.

Come then, O my Soul, come and think of the Kindness and Love of God our Saviour, his good will to Man which defign'd our Redemption; the Spring and first Wheel of that Work of Wonder. Herein is Love! Tho God was happy from Eternity before Man had a Being, and would have been happy to Eternity if Man had never been, or had been miserable: Tho' Man's Nature was mean and despicable; tho' his Crimes were heinous and detestable; tho' by his Disobedience he had forfeited the Protection of a Prince; tho' by his Ingratitude he had forfeited the Kindness of a Friend; and tho' by his Perfidiousness he had forfeited the Benefits of a Covenant, yet the tender Mercies of our God mov'd for his Relief. Come and fee a World of Apostate Angels pass'd by, and left to perish; no Redeemer, no Saviour provided for them but fallen Man pity'd and help'd; tho' Angels had been more bonourable, and would have been more serviceable.

Come and think of God's Patience and Forbearance exercis'd towards Man; The Long-Suffering of our Lord is Salvation. Think how much he bears, and how long, with the World, with me, tho most most provoking. This Patience left room for the Salvation, and gives hopes of it. If the Lord had been pleas'd to kill us, he would have done it before now.

Come and think especially of the Wisdom of God, which is so gloriously display'd in the Contrivance of the Work of our Redemption: Here's the Wisdom of God in a Mistery, even the hidden Wisdom which God ordained before the World for our Glory, I Cor. 2. 7. Think of the Measures God hath taken, the Means he hath devis'd, that the Banish'd might not be for ever expelled from bim. 2 Sam. 14. 14. Think with Wonder how all the Divine Attributes are by the Method pitch'd upon, fecur'd from Damage and Reproach, so that one. is not glorified by the Diminution of the Lustre of another. When Sin had brought things to that Arait that one would think either God's Justice. Truth, and Holiness must be eclips'd and clouded. or Man's Happinels must be for ever lost, Infinite Wisdom finds out an Expedient for the securing both of God's Honour, and of Man's Happiness: Tis now no Disparagement at all to God's Justice so pardon Sin, nor to his Holiness to be reconcil'd to Sinners; for by the Death of Christ Justice is fatisfied, and by the Spirit of Christ Sinners are fanctified. Mercy and Truth here meet together; behold, Righteousness and Peace kiss each other. Be astonish'd O Heavens at this, and wonder O' Earth. And thou, my Soul, that owest all thy Joys, and all thy Hopes to this Contrivance, defpairing to find the bottom of this unfarhomable Fountain of Life, sit down at the brink and adore the Depth; O the Depth of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! Rom. 11. 33.

Thirdly, Let us let our selves to think of the Person of the Redeemer, and his Glorious Undertaking of the the Work of our Salvation. Come, my Soul, and think of Christ, who thought of thee; think of him as the Eternal Son of God, the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person, who lay in his Bosom from Eternity, and had an infinite Joy and Glory with him before the Worlds were, and in whom dwells all the Fulness of the Godhead; the Eternal Wisdom, the Eternal Word that hath Life in himself, and is one with the Father, and who thought it no robbery to be equal with God. He is thy Lord (O my Soul) and worship thou him.

Think of him as the former of all things, without whom was not any thing made that was made. Thrones and Dominions, Principalities and Powers, all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things confift, Col. 1. 16, 17. Let this engage my Veneration for him, let this encourage my Faith and Hope in him: If I have my Being from him, I must consecrate my Being to him, and may expect my Bliss in

him.

Think of him as Immanuel, the Word incarnate, God manifest in the Flesh, cloath'd with our Nature, taking part of Flesh and Blood, that for us in our Nature he might satisfy the Justice of God whom we had offended, and break the Power of Satan by whom we were enflav'd. Come my Soul, and with an Eye of Faith behold the Beauties, the transcendant unparallel'd Beauties of the Redee-See him white and ruddy, fairer than the Children of Men, perfectly pure and spotless, wife and holy, kind and good; that hath the infinite Mercies of a God, and withal the experimental Compassions of a Man that hath been touch'd with the feeling of our Infirmities. See him by Faith as John saw him in Vision, Rev. 1. 13, &c. see him and admire him, as one that in all things hath

the Preheminence; none like him, nor any to be

compar'd with him.

Think of him as the Undertaker of our Redemption, the Redemption of the Soul, which was To precious, that otherwise it must have ceased for ever. When the fealed Book of God's Counfels concerning Man's Redemption was produc'd, none in Heaven or Earth was found worthy to open that Book or to look thereon, Rev. 5.3, 4. When Sacrifice and Offering for Sin would not do, and the Blood of Bulls and Goats had been try'd in vain, and found ineffectual, then faid he, Lo I come; this ruin shall be under my Hands, alluding to Isa. 3.6. Come my Soul and fee Help laid upon one that is mighty; one chosen out of the People, and every way qualified for the Undertaking; able to do the Redeemer's Work, and fit to wear the Redeemer's Crown. See how willingly he offer'd himself to the Service, how chearfully he oblig'd himself to go thro' with it, and engaged his Heart to approach unto God as our Advocate. It is the Voice of thy Beloved, O my Soul, behold he cometh, leaping upon the Mountains, skipping upon the Hills, making nothing of the Difficulties that lay in his Behold thy King cometh, thy Bridegroom cometh, go forth my Soul, go forth to meet him with thy joyful Hofannas, and bid him welcome; Bleffed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord.

Fourthly, Let us fet our selves to think of the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Dishonours done to him, and the Honours done to us by it. Here's a wide Field for our Meditations to expatiate in, nor can we determine to know any thing before a Sacrament, more proper and profitable than Jesus Christ and him crucified; listed up from the Earth, and drawing all Men unto him, as the Attractive Loadstone of their Hearts, and the common Centre of their

their Unity. Come then, and behold the Man; represent to thy self (O my Soul) not to thy Fancy, but to thy Faith, the Lamb of God taking away the Sins of the World, by the Sacrifice of himself.

Come and look over the Particulars of Christ's Sufferings, all the Humiliations and Mortifications of his Life: but especially the Pains, Agonies, and Ignominies of his Death. Review the Story, thou wilt fill find something in it surprizing and very affecting: Take notice of all the Circumstances of his Pathon, and fay, Never was Sorrow like unto his Sorrow. Take notice especially of the Disgrace and Reproach done him in his Sufferings, the shame he was industriously loaded with: This contributed greatly to the Satisfaction made by his Sufferings: God had been injur'd in his Glory by Sin; and no other way could he be injurd: He therefore who undertook to make Reparation for that Injury, not only deny'd himself in, and divested himself of the Honours due to an incarnate Deity, but tho' most innocent and most exeellent voluntarily submitted to the utmost Difgraces that could be done to the worst of Criminals. Thus he restored that which he took not away: See him, my Soul, fee him enduring the Crofs and despising the Shame.

Come and see the Purchases of the Cross; the Blood there shed is the Ransom, with which we are redeem'd from Hell; the Price with which Heaven is bought for us: See it a Price of inestimable value; The Topaz of Ethiopia cannot equalit, nor shall it be valued with the Gold of Ophir, with the precious Onyx, or the Saphire. No, my Soul, thou wast not redeemed with such corruptible things. The Pardon of Sin, the Favour of God, the Graces of the Spirit; the Blessings of the Covenant, and Eternal hise, could not be purchased with Silver and Gold, but are dearly bought and paid for with the

the precious Blood of the Son of God. All the Praife

be to the Glorious Purchaser.

Come and see the Victories of the Cross; see the Lord Jesus even then a Conquerour when he seem'd a Captive; then spoiling Principalities and Powers when he seem'd totally deseated, and routed by them. See Christ upon the Cross breaking the Serpent's Head, disarming Satan, triumphing over Death and the Grave, leading Captivity captive, and going forth in that Chariot of War, conquering and to conquer.

Think, my Soul, think what thou owest to the Dying of the Lord Jesus: The Priviledges of thy Way, and the Glories of thy Home; all thou hast, all thou hopest for that is valuable, they are all precious Fruits gather'd from this Tree of Life. Christ's Wounds are thy Healing, his Agomies thy Repose, his Conslicts thy Conquests, his Groams thy Songs, his Pains thine Ease, his Shame thy Glory, his Death thy Life, his Sufferings thy Sal-

vation.

Fifthly, Let us fet our felves to think of the prefent Glories of the exalted Redeemer. When we meditate on the Cross he bore, we must not forget the Crown he wears within the Vail. Think, my Soul, think where be is, at the Right-hand of the Father, far above all Pricipalities and Powers, and every Name that is named; he is fet down upon the Throne of the Majesty in the highest Heavens. Having obtained Eternal Redemption for us, he is entred with his own Blood into the Holy Place. Think how he is artended there with an innumerable Company of Angels that continually furround the Throne of God and of the Lamb; think of the Songs there fung to his Praise, the Crowns there cast at his Feet, and the Name he there hath above every Name. Think especially what he is doing there. He always appears in the presence of God, as the great High Priest of our Profession, to intercede for all those that come to God by him; and he attends continually to this very thing: There he is preparing a Place for all his Followers, and thence he will shortly come to receive them to himself, to

behold his Glory, and to share in it.

Dwell on these Thoughts, O my Soul, and say as they did who saw his Glory in his Transsiguration, It is good to be here; here let us make Tabernacles: Let these Thoughts kindle in thee an earnest Desire (shall I call it a Holy Curiosity) to see him as he is, Face to Face. His Advancement is thine Advantage: As the Fore-runner, he is for me enter'd: Let the Contemplation of the Joy he is enter'd into, and the Power he is there girded with, have such an Instuence upon me, as that by Faith I may be raised up likewise, and made to sit together with him in Heavenly Places, Eph. 2. 6.

Sixthly, Let us fet our selves to think of the un-Searchable Riches of the New Covenant, made with us in Jesus Christ, and Seal'd to us in the Sacraments. Peruse this Covenant in the several Dispensations of it, from the dawning of its Day in the first Promise, to that Noon Day-Light, which Life and Immortality are brought to by the Gofpel. Read over the several Articles of it, and observe how well order'd it is in all things, so well, that it could not be better. Review its Promises, which are precious and many, very many, very precious, and fure to all the Seed. Search into the hidden Wealth that is treasur'd up in them; dig into these Mines; content not thy felf with a transient view of these Fountains of living Water, but bring thy Bucket and draw with Joy out of those Wells of Salvation. Go walk about the Zion, this City of God, tell the Towers, mark well the Bulwarks, consider

the Palaces, and fay, this God, who is our God in Covenant, is ours for ever and ever, he will be our

Guide even unto Death, Pfal. 48. 12, 13, 14.

Stir up thy self therefore, O my Soul, to meditate on the Priviledges of a Justified State; the Liberties and Immunities, the Dignities and Advantages that are convey'd by the Charter of Pardon. O the Blessedness of the Man whose Iniquities are forgiven! See him secur'd from the Arrests of the Law, the Curse of God, the Evil of Affliction, the Sting of Death, and the Damnation of Hell. Read with Pleasure the Triumphs of Blessed Paul, Rom. 8.33, &c. Happy thou art, my Soul, and all is well with thee, or shall be shortly, if thy Sin be

pardon'd.

Meditate on the Honours and Comforts of a State of Grace: If now I am a Child of God, adopted, and regenerated, and have received the Spirit of Adoption, I have liberty of Access to the Throne of Grace, I have a fanctified use of my Creature Comforts, my Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; all is mine, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the World, or Life, or Death, or things present or things to come, all are mine, 1 Cor. 1. 21, 22. I have Meat to eat that the World knows not of, Joy that a Stranger doth not intermeddle with. Let the Thoughts of these Priviledges work in thee O my Soul, a holy Disdain of the Pleasures of Sense and the Profits of the World, whenever they come in competition with the Gains of Godliness, and the Delights of the Spiritual Life: Offer those to them that know no better.

Seventhly, I et us set our selves to think of the Communion of Saints. This contributes something to our Comfort in Communion with Christ, that thro' him we have sellowship one with another, I John

1.7. So that we being many, are one Bread and one Body, for Christ died to gather together in one the Children of God that were featter dabroad, John 11.52. that all might be one in him, in whom we all meet, as many Members in one Head, so making one Body; many Branches in one Root, so making one Vine; and many Stones in one Foundation

on, fo making one Building.

Enlarge thy Thoughts then, O my Soul, and ler it be a Pleasure to thee to think of the Relation thou standest in to the whole Family, both in Heaven and Earth, which is named of lefus Christ; to think that thou art come in Faith, Hope, and Love, even to the innumerable Company of Angels. and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, Heb. 12. 22, 23. Even these are thy Brethren and Fellow-Servants. Rejoice in thine Alliance to them, in their Affection to thee, and in the prospect thou hast of being with them fronth, of being with them eternally. Here we fit down with a little handful of weak and imperfect Saints, and those mix'd with Pretenders: but we hope shortly to have a Place and a Name in the General Affembly of the Firstborn, and to fit down with Abraham, and Isaac. and facob in the Kingdom of our Father; with all the Saints, and none but Saints, and Saints made perfect, and so to be together for ever with the Lord.

Please thy self also, O my Soul, with thinking of the Spiritual Communion thou hast in the Acts of Christian Piety, and in the Exercise of Christian Charity, with all that in every place on this Earth, call on the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours, 1 Cor. 1.2. Some good Christians there are that fall within the reach of our Personal Communion, to whom we give the Righthand of Fellowship: Others within the Line of our Acquaintance and Correspondence, and many

more whom we know not, nor have ever heard of, never faw nor are ever likely to fee in this World; but all these are our Companions in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ: They and we are guided by the same Rule, animated by the same Spirit, conform'd to the same Image, interested in the same Promises, and joined to the same great Body: They and we meet daily at the same Throne of Grace, under the Conduct of the same Spirit of Adoption, which teacheth us all to cry, Abba Father: And they and we hope to meet shortly at the same Throne of Glory, under the Conduct of the fame Jesus, who will gather his Elect from the four Winds, and present them all together unto the Father. Christ hath pray'd, that all that believe on him may be one, and therefore we are fure they are so, for the Father heard him always, John 17. 20, 21. Let this Subject yield us some delightful Thoughts here in a scatter'd World, and a divided Church.

Eighthly, Let us set our selves to think of the Happiness of Heaven: A pleasant Theme this is, very improveable, and pertinent enough to an Ordinance which hath so much of Heaven in it. If indeed we have Heaven in our Eye as our Home and Rest, and our Conversation there, we cannot but have it much upon our Hearts. Have we good Hope thro' Grace of being shortly with Christ in the Heavenly Paradise, where there is fulness of Foy and Pleasures for evermore, where we shall see God's Glory, and enjoy his Love immediately to our compleat and everlasting Satisfaction? Do we expect that yet a little while the Veil shall be rent, the Shadows of the Evening shall be done away, and we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known? Are we in prospect of a Crown of Glory that fades not away, an incorruptible and Raile undefiled Inheritance?

Raife thy Thoughts then, O my Soul, to the joyful Contemplation of the Glory to be revealed: Arise then, and survey this Land of Promise, as Abraham, Gen. 13. 14. Go with Moses to the top of Pisgah, and take a view of it, by Faith. Get a Scripture Map of that Canaan, and study it well. Think, my Soul, what they fee in that World, who always behold the Face of our Father, and in it fee all Truth and Brightness; and the Perfection of Beauty: Think what they have there that eat of the Tree of Life, and the bidden Manna, whose Faculties are enlarg'd to take in the full Communications of Divine Love and Grace, and who have God himself with them as their God, Rev. 21. 3. Think what they are doing there, who dwell in God's House, and are still praising him, and rest not Day nor Night from doing it. Think of the good Company that is there, thousands of thousands of Bleffed Angels, and Holy Souls, with whom we shall have an intimate and undisturbed Converse in perfect Light and Love.

Compare the present state thou art in, my Soul, with that thou hopest for, and let it be a pleasure to thee to think that whatever is here, thy Grief and Burthen shall be there remov'd, and done away for ever. Satan's Temptations shall there no more assault thee, thine own Corruptions shall there no more ensnare thee, the Guilt of Sin, and Doubts about thy Spiritual State, shall there no more terrify and perplex thee; no Pain nor Sickness, nor Sorrow shall be an allay to the Enjoyments of that World, as they are to those of this World. All Tears shall there be wiped away, even

those for Sin.

On the other fide, whatever is here thy Delight and Pleasure, shall there be perfected: The Knowledge of God, Joy in him, and Communion with him, are here as it were thy running Banquets,

there they shall be they continual Feast. The Work of Grace begun in thee, is that which reconciles thee to thy self, and gives thee some pleasure now in thy Reslections upon thy self: This Work shall there be compleated, and the finishing Strokes given to it by the same skilful and happy Hand

that begun it.

Come now, my Soul, and neglect not the Gift that is in thee, but Meditate upon these things, give thy self wholly to them, I Tim. 4. 14, 15. in them is. Be thou in them, as in thy Business, as in thine Element. Think of the Things that are not seen that are Eternal, the things of the invisible and unchangeable World, till thou findest thy self so affected with them, as even to forget the things that are here below, that are here behind, and look upon them with a holy Negligence, that thou may st with greater diligence reach towards the things that are before, and press toward the Mark for the Prize of the High Calling, Phil. 3. 13, 14.

- 2. We must not only Meditate, but we must pray, and cry earnestly to God for Assistance and Acceptance in what we do. When the Apostle had reckon'd up all the Parts of the Christian's Armour, he concludes with this, Praying always, Eph. 6. 18. Prayer must gird on the whole Armour of God, for without Prayer all our Endeavours are vain and inessectual. Therefore in our Preparations for the Lord's Supper, time must be spent, and Pains taken in Prayer, for two Reasons.
- (1.) Because this is a proper means of quickning our selves, and stirring up our Graces. One Duty of Religion is of use to dispose and sit us for another; and the most solemn Services ought to be approach'd gradually, and thro' the outer Courts. In Prayer the Soul ascends to God, and converseth

with him, and thereby the Mind is prepar'd to receive the Visits of his Grace, and habituated to Holy Exercises. Even the Blessed Jesus prepar'd himself for the offering up of the great Sacrifice by Prayer, a long Prayer in the House, John 17. and strong Cryings with Tears in the Garden. Three times Christ was spoken to while he was here upon Earth, by Voices from Heaven, and they all three found him praying. That at his Baptism, Luke 3. 21. Fefus being baptiz'd and praying, the Heaven was open'd. That at his Transfiguration, Luk. 9.29. as he pray'd the Fashion of his Countenance was alter'd. And that a little before his Passion, John 12. 27, 28. when he pray'd, Father glorify thy Name, the Voice came from Heaven, I have glorified it, &c. Saul of Tarfus prays, and then fees a Vision, Att. 9. 11, 12. and afterwards, Att. 22. 17, 18. Cornelius had his Vision when he was at Prayer, Act. 10. 30. And Peter his, ver. 9, 10. All which Instances, and many the like, suggest to us, That Communion with God in Prayer prepares and disposes the Mind for Communion with him in other Duties.

(2.) Because this is the appointed way of fetching in that Mercy and Grace which God hath promised, and which we stand in need of. In God is our Help, and from him is our Fruit found; and he hath promised to help us, to give us a new Heart, to put his Spirit within us, and to cause us to walk in his Statutes, Ezek. 36. 26, 27. but it follows there, ver. 37. I will yet for this be enquir'd of, by the House of Israel, to do it for them. How can we expect the Presence of God with us if we do not invite him by Prayer? or the Power of God upon us if we do not by Prayer derive it from him? The greatest Blessings are promised to the Prayer of Faith; but God will not give, if we will not ask, Why should he?

G. 4

But

Put what must we pray for, when we draw near to God in this solemn Ordinance? Solomon tells us that both the Preparations of the Heart in Man, and the Answer of the Tongue is from the Lord, Prov. 16.1. To him therefore we must apply our selves for both. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in these Prayers, and in it the Blessed Spirit belieth our Institution, for simuch as we know not what to pray for, in this, or in any other case, as we ought.

1. We must pray that we may be prepar'd for the Solemnity before it comes. Whatever is necessary to qualify us for Communion with God in it, is spoken of in Scripture as God's Gift; and whatever is the Matter of God's Promise, must be the Matter of our Prayers; for Promises are given not only to be the Ground of our Hope, but also to be the Guide of our Desire in Prayer. Is Knowledge necessary? out of his Mouth cometh Knowledge and Unde standing, Prov. 2. 6. and at Wisdom's Gates we must wait for-Wisdom's Gifts, rejoicing herein, That the Son of God is come, and hath given us an Unde standing, 1 John 5. 20. Is Faith necessary? That's not of our selves, it is the Gift of God, Eph. 2.8. Him therefore we must attend, who is both the Author and the Finisher of our Faith: To him we must pray, Lord increase our Faith: Lord perfect what is lacking in it: Lord fulfil the Work of Faith with Power. Is Love necessary? 'Tis the Holy Ghoft that sheds abroad that Love in our Hearts; and circumcifeth our Hearts to Love # the Lord our God. To that Heavenly Fire we must therefore go for this Holy Spark, and pray for the Breath of the Almighty to blow it up into a Flame. Is Repentance necessary? Tis God that gives Repentance, that takes away the Stony Heart and gives a Heart

Heart of Flesh, and we must beg of him to work that bleffed change in us. Behold the Fire and the Wood, the Ordinance instituted, and all needful Provision made for our Sacrifice: But where is the Lamb for a Burnt-offering? Where is the Heart to be offer'd up to God? If God did not provide bimself a Lamb, the Solemnity would fail; Gen. 22. 7. 8. to him therefore we must go to buy such things as we have need of against the Feast; that is, to beg them; for we buy without Money and without Price; and fuch Buyers shall not be driven out of God's Temple, nor flighted there, however they are

look'd on in Mens Markets.

2. Pray, That our Hearts may be enlarged in the Dury. 'Tis the gracious Promise of God that he will open Rivers in the Wilderness, and Streams in the Defert, and the joint-experience of all the Saints, that they looked unto him, and were lightned; fuch Out-goings of Soul therefore rowards God, as may receive the Incomes of Divine Strength and Comfort, we should earnestly defire and pray for. Pray, pray that God would grace his own Institutions with such manifest Tokens of his Presence as those two Disciples had, who reason'd thus for their own Conviction, that they had been with Fesus. Did not our Hearts burn within us? Luk. 24. 32. Pray that by the Grace of God, the Business of the Ordinance may be faithfully done; the Work of the Day, the Sacrament Day, in its Day, according as the Duty of the Day requires, Ezr. 3, 4. Pray, that the Ends of the Ordinance may be fincerely aim'd at, and happily attain'd, and the great Intentions of the Institution of it answer'd; that you may not receive the Grace of God therein in vair. O that my Heart may be engaged to approach unto God! so engag'd as that nothing may prevail to difengage it! Come, Blessed Spirit, and breach upon these dry Bones! Move upon the Waters of the Ordinances, and produce a New Creation:

Awake O North Wind, and come thou South, and blow upon my Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow forth; and then let my Beloved come into his Garden, (his it is, and then 'twill be fit to be call'd his) and eat his pleasant Fruits, Cant. 4. 16.

3. Pray, that we may be favourably accepted of God, both in the Preparation and in the Performance. In vain do we worship, if God do not accept us: The Applause of Men is but a poor Reward (fuch as the Hypocrites were content with, and put off with) if we come short of the Favour of God: Herein therefore we should labour, this should be Ambitions of our highest Honour, the top of our Preferment, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of the Lord, 2 Cor. 9.5. About this therefore we should be very sollicitous in our Enquiries, Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord so as to please him? For this we should be very importunate in our Prayers, O that I knew where I might find him! 30b 23. 3. O that I might be met at the Table of the Lord with a Bleffing, and not with a Breach! O that God would fmile upon me there, and bid me welcome! O that the Beloved of my Soul would shew me fome Token for good there, and fay unto me, I am thy Salvation; Son, Daughter, be of good chear, thy Sins are forgiven thee. Let him kiss me with the Kiffes of his Mouth, for his Love is better than Wine. O that it might be a Communion indeed between Christ and my Soul! That which is in vogue with the most of Men is, Who will shew us any good? But when I am admitted to touch the top of the Golden Sceptre, this is my Petition, this is my Request, Lord, lift up the Light of thy Countenance upon me, and that shall put true Gladness into my Heart, greater than the Joy of Harveft.

4. Pray, that what is amis may be pardon'd in the Blood of Christ. This Prayer good Hezekiah hath put into our Mouths (God put it into our Hearts!) 2 Chron. 30. 18, 19. The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his Heart in fincerity to feek the Lord God of his Fathers, and aims honestly. tho' he be not cleansed according to the Purification of the Sanctuary. We cannot but be conscious to our felves, that in many things we come short of our Duty, and wander from it: The Rule is firich; 'tis fit it should be so, and yet no particular Rule more frict than that general and fundamental Law of God's Kingdom, Thou Shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and Soul, and Mind, and Might: But our own Heartsknow, and God who is greater than our Hearts, and knows all things. knows that we do not come up to the Rule, nor continue in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them: By our Deficiencies we become obnoxious to the Curse, and should perish. by it, if we were under the Law: But we are encouraged by a penitent believing Prayer to fue out our Pardon, having an Advocate with the Father.

Would we take with us Words in these Prayers? David's Psalms and St. Pau's Epistles will surnish us with great variety of acceptable Words; Words which the Holy Ghost teacheth; and other Helps of Deposion, which thanks be to God we have plenty of, may be us'd to much Advantage: And if in these Prayers we stir up our selves to take hold on God, our Experience shall be added to that of Thousands, That Jacob's God never said to Jacob's Sced, Seek ye me in vain.

CHAP. VII.

Directions in what Frame of Spirit we should come to, and attend upon this Ordinance.

TO make up the Wedding Garment, which is proper for this Wedding Feast, it is requisite not only that we have an Habitual Temper of Mind agreeable to the Gospel, but that we have fuch an actual Disposition of Spirit, as is confonant to the Nature and Intentions of the Ordinance. It is an excellent Rule in the Scripture Directory for Religious Worship, Eccl. 5. 1. Keep thy Foot when thou goest to the House of God, that is, Keep thy Heart with all diligence, (Prov. 4. 22.) Look well to the Motions of thy Soul, and observe the Steps it takes. When we are to fee the Goings of our God, our King in the Sanctuary, (Pfal. 68. 24.) it concerns us to fee to our own Goings. Keep thy Foot, that is, do nothing rashly, but when thou goest to eat with a Ruler, consider diligently what is before thee, Prov. 23. 1. 'Twas not enough for the Priests under the Law that they were wash'd and dress'd in their Priestly Garments when they were first consecrated, but they must be carefully wash'd and dress'd every time they went in to Minister, else they went in at their Peril; we are spiritual Priests to our God, and must do the Office of our Priefthood with a due Decorum, remembering that this is that which the Lord hath said, (God by his Crace speak it home to our Hearts) I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, that is, I will be attended

Due Approach to the Lord's Supper. 133 tended as a Holy God, in a Holy Manner, and fo before all the People I will be glorified, Lev. 10. 3. We then faultify God in Holy Duties when we fanctify our selves in our Approaches to them; that is. when we separate our selves from every thing that is common or unclean, from all Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, and consecrate our selves to God's Glory as our End, and to his Service as our Business. If we would have the Ordinance fantified to us for our Comfort and Benefit, we must thus sandtify our selves for it. Joshua's Command to the People when they were to follow the Ark of the Covenant thro' Fordan, should be still founding in our Ears. the Night before a Sacrament, Fosh. 3. 5. Santtify your selves, for to morrow the Lord will do Wonders among you. When the God of Glory admits such Dunghil Worms, fuch a Generation of Vipers as we are, into Covenant and Communion with himself; when he gives Gifts, such Gifts, even to the Rebellious; when by the Power of his Grace he fanctifies the Sinful, and comforts the Sorrowful, and gives fuch Holiness and Joy as is Life from the Dead; furely then he doth Wonders among

For our Help herein, the following Directions perhaps may be of some Use.

nestly pray to God to fanctify us.

us: That we may see these Wonders done, and share in the Benesit of them: That we may expe-

rience them done in our Souls, Jordan driven back, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, to open a Passage for us into the Heavenly Canaan, let us satisfy our selves, and ear-

a fixedness of Thought. There is scarce any instance of the Corruption of Nature, and the Moral impotency which by Sin we are brought under, more com-

complain'd of by serious Christians than the vanity of the Thoughts, and the difficulty of fixing them to that which is good. They are apt to wander after a thousand Impertinencies, and it is no easie matter to gather them in, and keep them employ'd as they shou'd be; we all find it so by sad experience. Vain thoughts lodge within us, and are most a hindrance and disturbance to us when good Thoughts are invited into the Soul, and should be entertain'd there. When therefore we apply our selves to a Religious Service, which will find work for all our Thoughts, and which presents Objects well worthy of our closest Contemplation, we are concern'd to take pains with our selves to get our Hearts engag'd, and to bring every thought into Obe-

dience to the Law of this Solemnity.

This is a time to fer aside the thoughts of every. thing that's foreign and unfeafonable; and all those foolish Speculations which use to be the unprofitable Amusements of our idle Hours, and the Sports and Pastimes of our carnal Minds: Away with them all; clear the Court of those Vagrants, when the Doors are to be open'd for the King of Glory to come in. Are they Thoughts that pretend Bufiness, and are as Buyers and Sellers in the Temple? Tell them you have other business to mind, bid them depart for this time, and at a more convenient Seafon you will call for them. Do they pretend urgent bufiness, as Nehemiah's enemies did when they fought to give him a Diversion? Give them the Repulse that he gave, and like him, repeat it as oft as they repeat their Sollicitations, Neb. 6. 2, 3, 4. I am doing a great work, why should the work cease, while I leave it, and come down to you? Do they prerend Friendship, and send in the name of thy Mother, and thy Brethren standing without, to speak with thee? Yet dismiss them as Christ did, by giving the Preference to better Friends: Let not thoughts

Due Approach to the Lord's Supper. 135 of those we love best, divert us from thinking of Christ, whom we know we must love beeter.

This is a time to fummon the Attendance of all the thoughts, and keep them close to the business we are going about. Suffer none to wander, none to trifle, for here is employment, good employment for them all, and all little enough. Tho' a perfect fixation of thought, without any diffractions during the Solemnity, is what I believe none can attain to in this state of Imperfection, yet it is what we should defire and aim ar, and come as near to as we can. Let us charge our thoughts not to straggle, keep a watchful eye upon them, and call them back when they begin to rove. Keep them in full employment about that which is proper and pertinent, which will prevent their starting aside to that which is otherwise. Come, bind the Sacrifice with Cords to the Horns of the Altar, that it may not be to feek when it should be facrific'd, Pfal. 118. 27. Be able to fay, through Grace, O God, my beart is fix'd, my beart is fixed, tho' unfixed at other times, yet fixed now. Look up to God for Grace to establish the Heart, and keep it steady: Look with Sorrow and Shame upon its wandrings: Shur the Door against Distractions: Watch and Pray against that Temptation; and when those Birds of Prey come down upon the Sacrifices, do as Abraham did, Gen. 15. 11. Drive them away. And while you fincerely endeavour to keep your hearts fixed, be not discourag'd; the vain thoughts that are difallow'd, striven against, and repented of, tho' they are our hindrance, yet they shall not be our ruin.

2. Let us address our selves to this Service with an evenness and calmness of Affection, free from the disorders and ruffles of Passion. A sedate and quiet Spirit, not toss'd with the Tempests of Care and Fear, but devolving Care on God, and silencing Fear with Faith, not sinking under the Load of

Tem-

Temporal Burthens, but supporting it self with the hopes of eternal Joys, easie it self, because submissive to its God; this is a Spirit sit to receive and return Divine visits. They were still Waters on the face of which the Spirit mov'd to produce the World. The Lord was not in the Wind, was not in the Earthquake. The Prince of the Power of the Air raiseth Storms, for he loves to fish in troubled Waters: But the Prince of Peace stills Storms, and quiets the Winds and Waves, for he casts his Net into a calm Sea: The waters of Shiloah run softly, and without noise, Isa. 8.6. And that River, the streams whereof make glad the City of our God, is none of those, the Waters whereof roar and are troubled, Psal. 46. 3, 4.

Let us therefore always study to be quiet, and however we are cross'd and disappointed, let not our hearts be troubled, let them not be cast down and disquieted within us. Let us not create or aggravate our own vexations, nor be put into a Disorder by any thing that occurs, but let the Peace of God always rule in our bearts, and then that Peace will keep them. They whose natural Temper is either fretful or fearful, have the more need to double their Guard; and when any disturbance begins in the Soul, should give diligence to suppress the tumult with all speed, lest the Holy Spirit be thereby provok'd to withdraw, and then they will have

But especially let us compose our selves, when we approach to the Table of the Lord. Charge the Peace then in the Name of the King of Kings; command Silence, when you expect to hear the Voice of Joy and Gladness: Stop the Mouth of clamorous and noisy Passions, banish tumultuous Thoughts, suffer not those evil Spirits to speak, but expel them, and let your Souls return to God, and repose in him as their Rest. Bring not unquiet

but uncomfortable Sacraments.

Due Approach to the Lord's Supper. 137 distemper'd Spirits to a Transaction, which requires the greatest Calmness and Serenity possible. Let all intemperate Heats be cool'd, and the Thoughts of that which hath made an uproar in the Soul be banished, and let a strict Charge be given to all about you, to all within you, by the Roes and the Hinds of the Field, those innocent pleasant Creatures, that they stir not up, nor awake your love, nor give any Disturbance to your Communion with him.

3. Let us address our selves to it with a Hely Awe and Reverence of the Divine Majesty. We ought to be in the Fear of the Lord every day, and all the day long, for he is our ftrict Observer wherever we are, and will be the Judge of Perfons and Actions, by whose unerring Sentence our Eternal State will be divided; but in a special manner he is greatly to be fear'd in the Assemblics of his Saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him, Pfal. 89. 7. and the nearer we approach to him, the more reverent we should be. Angels that always behold God's Face, see cause to cover their own: Even then when we are admitted to fit down at God's Table, we must remember that we are worshipping at his Foot-stool, and therefore must lay our felves very low before him, and in his Fear worship towards his Holy Temple, Psal. 5. 7. Let us not rush into the presence of God in a careless manner, as if he were a Man like our felves, nay, fo as we would not approach to a Prince or a great Man, but observe a Decorum, giving to him the Glory due unto his Name, and taking to our felves the Shame due to ours. If he be a Master where is his Fear? We do not worship God acceptably, if we do not worship him with reverence and Godly Fear, Heb. 12. 28;

(1.) We must worship him with reverence as a Glorious God, a God of infinite Perfection, and Almighty Power, who covers himself with Light as with a Garment, and yet as to us makes Darkness his Pavilion. Dare we profane the Temples of the Holy Ghoft by outward Indecencies of Carriage and Behaviour, the manifest Indications of a vain and regardless Mind? Dare we allow of flat and common Thoughts of that God who is over all bleffed for evermore? See him (my Soul) fee him by Faith, upon a Throne, high and lifted up, not only upon a Throne of Grace, which encourages thee to come with boldness, but upon a Throne of Glory, and a Throne of Government, which obliges thee to come with Caution. Remember that God is in Heaven, and thou art upon Earth, and therefore let thy Words be few, Eccl. 5. 2. Be still, and know that he is God, that he is great, and keep thy Distance. Let an awful Regard to the Glories of the Eternal God, and the exalted Redeemer, make thee humble and ferious, very ferious, very humble in thine approach to this Ordinance, and keep thee fo during the Solemnity.

(2.) We must also worship him with Godly Fear, as a Holy God, a God whose Name is Jealous, and who is a consuming Fire, Heb. 12. 29. we have reason to fear before him, for we have offended him, and have made our selves obnoxious to his Wrath and Curse, and we are but upon our good Behaviour, as Probationers for his Favour. He is not a God that will be mocked, that will be tristed with: If we think to put a Cheat upon him, we shall prove in the End to have put the most dangerous Cheat upon our own Souls: In this Act of Religion therefore, as well as in others, we must mork out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling.

- 4. Let us come to this Ordinance with a Holy Jealousy over our selves, and a humble Sense of our own unworthiness. We must sit before the Lord in such a Frame as David compos'd himself into, when he said, Who am I O Lord God, and what is my Father's House, that thou hast brought me hitherto? 2 Sam. 7. 18. Nothing prepares the Soul more for Spiritual Comforts than Humility doth.
- (1.) It may be, we have reason to suspect our selves, left we come unworthily. Tho' we must not cherish such Suspicions of our State as will damp our Joy in God, and discourage our Hope in Christ, and fill us with Amazement; nor such as will take off our Chariot Wheels; and keep us standing at a gaze when we should be going forward; yet we must maintain such a lealousy of our selves, as will keep us humble, and take us off from all felfconceit, and felf-confidence; fuch a Jealoufy of our felves as will keep us watchful, and fave us from anking into carnal Security. And now is a proper time to think how many there are that eat Bread with Christ, and yet lift up the Heel against him; the Hand of him that betrayeth him perhaps is with him upon the Table; which should put us upon afking, as the Disciples did, just before the first Sacrament, Lord is it I? Mat. 26. 22. Many that eat and drink in Christ's Presence, will be rejected and disown'd by him in the great Day; have not I some reason to fear, lest that be my Doom at last? to fear, lest a Promise being left me of entring into Rest, I should seem to come short? to fear left when the King comes in to fee the Guests, he find me without a Wedding Garment? Be not too confident, O my Soul, lest thou deceive thy felf; be not bigkminded, but fear.

(2.) However, 'tis certain we have reason to abase our selves, for at the best, we are unworthy to come. If we are less than the least of God's Mercres, how much less are we than the greatest, than this, which includes all: We are unworthy of the Crumbs that fall from our Master's Table, much more unworthy of the Childrens Bread, and the Dainties that are upon the Table. Being invited, we may hope to be welcome; but what is there in us that we should be invited? Men invite their Friends and Acquaintance to their Tables, but we were naturally Strangers and Enemies in our Mind by wicked Works, and yet are we invited: Men invite fuch as they think will with their Quality or Merit grace their Tables, but we are more likely to be a Reproach to Christ's Table, being poor and maimed, balt and blind, and yet are pick'd up out of the High-Ways and the Hedges, Luk. 14. 21. Men invite fuch as they are under Obligations to, or have Expectations from, but Christ is no way indebted to us, nor can he be benefitted by us; our Goodness extends not to him, and yet he invites us. We have much more reason than Mephibolheth had, when he was made a constant Guest at David's Table, to bow our selves and say, What is thy Servant, that thou Should'st look upon such a dead Dog as I am? 2 Sam. 9. 8. They who thus humble themselves shall be exalted.

5. Yet let us come to this Ordinance with a gracious Confidence, as Children to a Father, to a Father's Table, not with any Confidence in our felves, but in Christ only. That flavish Fear which represents God as a hard Master, rigorous in his Demands, and extreme to mark what we do amis; which straitens our Spirits and subjects us to Bondage and Torment, must be put off and striven against, and we must come boldly to the Throne of Grace, to the Table of Grace, not as having any thing

thing in our selves to recommend us, but as having a High-Priest, who is touch'd with the feeling of our Infirmities, Heb. 4. 15, 16. As a Presumptuous Rudeness is a Provocation to the Master of the Feast, so a distrustful Shiness is displeasing to him, which looks as if we question'd either the Sincerity of the Invitation, or the Sufficiency of the

Provision.

This is the Fault of many good Christians: they come to this Sacrament rather like Prisoners to the Bar, than like Friends and Children to the Table; they come trembling and aftonish'd, and full of Confusion. Their Apprehensions of the Grandeur of the Ordinance, and the Danger of coming unworthily, run into an Extream, and become a Hindrance to the Exercise of Faith, Hope, and Love: This Extream we should carefully watch against, because it tends so much to God's Dishonour, our own Prejudice, and the Discouragement of others. Let us remember we have to do with one who is willing to make the best of sincere Defires, and ferious Endeavours, tho' in many things we be defective, and who deals with us in tender Mercy, and not in strict Justice; and who the' he be out of Christ a consuming Fire, yet in Christ is a gracious Father: Let us therefore draw near with a true Heart, and in full affurance of Faith, Heb. 10. 22. 'Tis related of Titus the Emperour, that when a poor Petitioner presented his Address to him with a trembling Hand, he was much difpleas'd, and ask'd him, Dost thou present thy Petition to thy Prince as if thou wer't giving Meat to: a Lion? Chide thy self for these amazing Fears; Why ait thou cast down, O my Scul, and why art thou disquieted within me? If the Spirit undertake to work all my Works in me, as the Son hath undertaken to work all my Works for me, both the one and the other shall be done effectually. Therefore

fore Hope thou in God, for I Shall yet praise

6. Let us come to this Ordinance with earnest Defires towards God, and Communion with him. It is a Feast, a Spiritual Feast, and we must come to it with an Appetite, a Spiritual Appetite; for the full Soul loath's even the Honey-comb, and flights the Offer of it, but to the hungry Soul that is sensible of its own needs, every bitter thing is sweet, even the Bitterness of Repentance when it is in order to Peace and Pardon. Our Desires towards the World and the Flesh must be check'd and moderated, and kept under the Government of Religion and Right Reason; for we have been too long spending our Money for that which is not Bread, and which is at the best unsatisfying; but our Desires towards Christ must be quicken'd and stir'd up. As the Hart, the hunted Hart panteth after the Refreshment of the Water-Brook, so earnestly must our Souls pant for the living God, Pfal.42. 1.2. The Invitation is given, and the Promife made to them only that hunger and thirst; they are call'd to come to the Waters, Isa. 55. 1. to come and drink, John 7. 37. and it is promised to them that they shall be filled, Mat. 5. 6. it is very necessary therefore that we work upon our Hearts the Confideration of those things that are proper to kindle this Holy Fire, and to blow up its Sparks into a Flame. We are then best prepar'd to receive temporal Mercies, when we are most indifferent to them, and content, if the Will of God be fo, to be without them? Did I desire a Son of my Lord? faith the good Shunammite, 2 Kin. 4. 28. Here the danger is of being too earnest in our Desires, as Rachel, Give me Children, or elfe I dy. But we are then best prepar'd to receive Spiritual Mercies when we are most importunate for them : Here the Desires cannot be too vehement. In the former case strong Defires

Defires evidence the Prevalency of Sense, but in this they evidence the Power of Faith, both realizing and valuing the Bleffings defir'd. The Deyout and Pious Soul thirsts for God, for the living God, as a thirsty Land, Pfal. 143. 6. -- 63. 1. It longs, yea, even faints for the Courts of the Lord, and for Communion with God in them, Pfal. 84. 2. It breaks for the longing it bath unto God's Judgment at all times, Pfal. 114. 20. Can our Souls witness to fuch Delires as these? O that I might have a more intimate Acquaintance with God, and Christ. and Divine Things! O that I might have the Tokens of God's Favour and fuller Affurances of his diftinguishing Love in Jesus Christ! O that my Covenant Interest in him, and Relation to him. might be clear'd up to me, and that I might have more of the Comfort of it! O that I might partake more of the Divine Grace, and by its effectual working on my Soul, might be made more conformable to the Divine Will and Likeness, more holy, humble, spiritual, heavenly, and more meer for the Inheritance! O that I might have the earnest of the Spirit in my Heart, sealing me to the Day of Redemption!

Thus the Defire of our Souls must be towards the Lord, and towards the Remembrance of his Name. In this imperfect State, where we are at home in the Body, and absent from the Lord, our Love to God acts more in Holy Desires than in Holy Delights. Tis rather Love in Motion, like a Bird upon the Wing, than Love at Rest, like a Bird upon the Nest (Psal. 84. 3.) All those who have the Lord for their God, agree to desire nothing more than God, for they know they have enough in him; but yet still they desire more and more of God; for till they come to Heaven, they will never have enough of him. Come then, my Soul, why art thou so cold in thy Desires towards those things which are

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design'd for thy peculiar Satisfaction, distinct from the Body? Why so eager for the Meat that perisheth, and so indifferent to that which endures to everlasting Life? Hast thou no Desire to that which is so necessary to thy support, and without which thou art undone? No Defire to that which will contribute fo much to thy Comfort, and yield thee an unexpressible Satisfaction? Provision is made in the Lord's Supper of Bread to strengthen thee, will not the Sense of thine own Weakness and Emptiness make thee hunger after that? Can'ft thou be indifferent to that which is the Staff of thy Life? Provision is made of Pleasant Food, fatthings full of Marrow, and Wines on the Lees; art thou not desirous of Dainties, such Dainties? Was the Tree of Knowledge fuch a Temptation, because it was pleasant to the Eye, and a Tree to be defired to make one wife, that our First Parents would break thro' the Hedge of a Divine Command, and venture all that was dear to them to come at it? And thall not the Tree of Life, which we are not only allowed, but commanded to eat of, and the Fruit of which will nourish us to Life Eternal, shall not that appear more pleasant in our Eyes, and more to be desired? God, even thine own God, who hath wherewithal to fupply all thy needs, and hath promis'd to be to thee a God All-sufficient, a God that is enough, he hath faid it, Pfal. 81. 10. Open thy Mouth wide, and I will fill it -- Thou art not straitned in him, be not straitned in thine own Defires.

7. Let us come to this Ordinance with raised Expectations. The same Faith that enlargeth the Desire, and draws out that to a Holy Vehemence, should also elevate the Hope, and ripen that to a Holy Confidence. When we come thirsting to these Waters, we need not fear that they will prove like the Brooks in Summer, which disappoint the weary

Traveller, for when it is hot, they are consum'd cut of their place, Job 6. 15. Sc: Such are all the broken Cisterns of the Creature, they perform not what they promise, or rather what we foolishly promise to our selves from them. No, but these are inexhaustible Fountains of Living Water, in which there is enough for all, tho' never so many, enough for each, tho' never so needy, enough for me, tho'

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Come, my Soul, what dost thou look for at the Table of the Lord? The Maker of the Feast is God himself, who doth nothing little, nothing mean, but is able to do exceeding abundantly, above what we are able to ask or think. When he gives, he gives like himself, gives like a King, gives like a God, all things richly to enjoy, confidering not what it becomes such ungrateful Wretches as we are to receive, but what it becomes such a bountiful Benefactor as he is to give. A lively Faith may expect that which is rich and great from him, that is Possessor of Heaven and Earth, and all the Wealth of both; and that which is kind and gracious from him that is the Father of Mercies, and the Gud of all Confolation. A lively Faith may expect all that's purchas'd by the Blood of Christ from a God who is righteous in all his ways, and all that's promis'd in the New Covenant from a God who cannot ly nor deceive.

The Provision in this Feast is Christ himself, and all his Benefits, all we need to save us from being miserable, and all we can defice to make us happy; and glorious things, no doubt, may be expected with him, in whom it pleased the Father that all subness should dwell. Let our Expectations be built upon a right Foundation, not any Merit of our own, but God's Mercy, and Christ's Mediation, and then build large, as large as the New Covernant in its utmost extent; build high, as high as

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Heaven in all its Glory. Come expecting to fee that which is most illustrious, and to taste and receive that which is most precious; come expecting that with which you will be abundantly satisfied.

Tho' what is prepar'd feems to a carnal Eve poor and scanty, like the five Loaves set before five thousand on, yet when Christ hath the breaking of those Loaves, they shall all eat and be filled. In this Ordinance the Oyl is multiplied, the Oyl of Gladness, 'tis multiplied in the pouring out, as the Widow's Oyl, 2 Kin. 4. 2. &c. Do as the did therefore, bring empty Viffels, bring not a few, they shall all be filled; the Expectations of Faith shall all be answer'd; the Oyl stays not (as there, ver. 6.) while there is an empty Veffel, waiting to be filled: give Faith and Hope their full Compass, and thou wilt find (as that Widow did, ver. 7.) there is enough of this Oyl, this multiplied Oyl, this Oyl from the Good Olive, to pay thy Debt, and enough beside for thee and thine to live upon. As we often wrong our selves by exceting too much from the World, which is Vanity and Vexation, fo we often wrong our felves by expecting too little from God, whose Mercy is upon us, according as we hope in him; and who in exerting his Power, and conferring his Gifts, still faith, According to your Faith be it unto you. The King of Israel loft his Advantage against the Syrians, by smiting thrice, and then staying, when he should have smitten five or fix times, 2 Kin. 13. 18, 19. And we do often in like manner prejudice our selves, by the Weakness of our Faith; we receive little, because we expect little; and are like them among whom Christ could not do many mighty Works because of their unbelief, Mar. 6. 5.

8. Let us come to this Ordinance with rejoicing and Thanksgiving. These two must go together, for whatever is the Matter of our Rejoicing must be

Due Approach to the Lord's Supper. 147 the Matter of our Thanksgiving; Holy Joy is the Heart of our Thankful Praise; and Thankful Praise is the Language of Holy Joy; and both these are very seasonable, when we are coming to an Ordinance, which is instituted both for the Honour of the Redeemer, and for the comfort of the Redeemed.

Besides the Matter for Joy and Praise, which we are furnished with in our Attendance on the Ordinance, even our Approach to it, is fuch an Honour, such a Favour as obligeth us to come before his Presence with singing, and even to enter into his Gates with Thanksgiving, Pfal. 100. 2, 4. With Gladness and Rejoicing shall the Royal Bride be brought, Pfal. 45. 15. Those that in their Preparations for the Ordinance have been fowing in Tears, may not only come again with rejoicing, bringing their Sheaves with them, but go with rejoicing to fetch their Sheaves, to meet the Ark, lifting up their Heads with Joy, knowing that their Redemption. and the Sealing of them to the Day of Redemption draws nigh. Let those that are of a sorrowful Spirit, hearken to this; chear up and be comforted. This Day is holy unto the Lord your God, mourn not, nor weep, Neb. 8.9. It is the Day which the Lord bath made, and we must rejoice and be glad in it; and the Joy of the Lord will be our Strength, and Oyl to our Wheels. All things confider'd, thou hast a great deal more reason than Haman had, to go in merrily with the King to the Banquet of Wine, Efth. 5.4.

Two things may justly be the matter of our Rejoicing and Thanksgiving in our Approach to this Ordinance.

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our Hands to get Wisdom. That such an Ordinance

as this was instituted for our Spiritual Nourishment and Growth in Grace: That it is transmitted down to us, is administred among us, and we are invited to it. This is a Token for good, which we have reason to rejoice in, and be very thankful for. That our Lot is not cast either among those that are Strangers to the Gospel, and so have not this Ordinance at all, or among those that are Enemies to the Gospel, and have it wretchedly corrupted, and turn'd into an idolatrous Service; but that Wisdom's Table is spread among us, and her Voice heard in our Streets, and we are call'd to her Feafts; we have a Nail in God's Holy Place, a Settlement in his House, and stated Opportunities of Communion with him. If the Lord had been pleas'd to kill us, he would not have showed us such things as these. O what a Priviledge is it thus to eat and drink in Christ's Presence! to sit down under his Shadow, at his Table with his Friends and Favourites! That we who deferv'd to have been fet with the Dogs of his Flock, should be set with the Children of his Family, and eat of the Childrens Bread; nay, that we should be numbred among his Priests, and eat of the Dedicated things. Bless the Lord. O my Soul.

(2.) That God hath given us a Heart to this Price in our Hands: We have reason to be thankful that he hath not only invited us to this Feast, which is a Token of his Good Will towards us; but that he hath inclin'd us to accept the Invitation, which is the Effect of a Good Work upon us. Many that are call'd make light of it, and go their way to their Farms and Merchandise, and if we had been left to our selves, we should have made the same soolish choice, and in the greatness of our Folly should have gone astray, and wander'd endless. 'Twas Free Grace that made us willing in the Day of Power, and graciously compell'd us to come in

Due Approach to the Lord's Supper. 149 to the Gospel Feast; 'twas distinguishing Grace that reveal'd to us Babes, the things which were hid from the Wise and Prudent: Let that Grace have the Glory, and let us have the Joy of this blessed Work.

9. Let us come to this Ordinance in Charity with all Men, and with a fince e Affection to all good Chriftians. It is a Love-Feast, and if we do not come in Love, we come without the Wedding Garment, and forseit the Comforts of the Feast. This is to be seriously thought of when we bring our Gift to the Altar, as we hope for Acceptance there.

When we come to the Sacrament we must bring with us, Ill-Will to none, Good-Will to all, but efpecially to them who are of the Houshold of Faith.

1. We must bear IU-Will to none, no, not to those that have been most injurious and provoking to us: Tho' they have affronted us never so much in our Honour, wrong'd us in our Interest, and fet themselves to vilify us, and do us mischief, yet we must not have them, nor entertain any Malice towards them; we must not be desirous or studious of Revenge, nor feek their Hurt in any respect. but must from our Hearts forgive them, as we our selves are, and hope to be forgiven of God. We must see to it that there be not the least Degree of Enmity to any Person in the World, lodg'd in our Breast, but carefully purge out all that old Leaven; not only lay afide the Thoughts of it for the prefent, but wholly pluck up and cast our that Root of Bitterness, which bears Gall and Worm-wood. Pure Hands must in this Ordinance as well as in Prayer, be lifted up, without Wrath and Doubting, I Tim. 2. 8. How can we expect that God should be reconcil'd to us, if we bring not with us a Disposition to be reconciled to our Brethren; for our Trefpasses against God are unspeakably greater than the worst of our Brethren's Trespasses against us. O that each would apply this Caution to themselves; you have a Neighbour, that upon some disgust conceiv'd, you cannot find in your Hearts to speak to, nor to speak well of; some one that you have entertain'd a Prejudice against, and would willingly do an ill turn to if it lay in your Power; some one whom it may be you are ready to fay, you cannot endure the Sight of; And dare you retain such a Spirit when you come to this Ordinance? Can you conceal it from God? Or do you think that you can justify it at his Bar, and make it out that you do well to be angry? Let the Fear of God's Wrath and the Hope of Christ's Love reduce you to a better temper; and when you celebrate the Memorial of the Dying of the Lord Jesus, be sure you remember this, that he is our Peace, and that he dy'd to flay all Enmities.

2. We must bear Good-Will to all, with a particular Affection to all good Christians. Christian Charity doth not only forbid that which is any way injurious, but it requires that which is kind and

friendly.

The Desire of our Hearts must be towards the Welfare of all: If we be indeed sollicitous about the Salvation of our own Souls, we cannot but have a tender Concern for the Souls of others, and be hearty Well-wishers to their Salvation likewise; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all Men to be saved, 1 Tim. 2.3, 4. True Grace hates Monopolies. We must thus love those whose Wickedness we are bound to hate; and carnestly desire their Happiness even while we industriously decline their Fellowship.

But the Delight of our Souls must be in the Saints that are on the Earth, those excellent ones; as David's was, Psal. 16. 3. They are precious in God's sight;

and honourable, and they should be so in ours; they have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Fesus Christ, and therefore by a sincere and affectionate Love to them, we also should have fellowship with them. Our Hearts will then be comforted when they are knit together in Love, Col. 2. 2. This Love must not be confin'd to those of our own Communion, our own way, and Denomination; then we love them for our own fakes, because they credit us, not for Christ's sake because they honour him: But fince God is no Respecter of Persons, we must not be such. In every Nation, he that fears God and works Rightenufness, is accepted of him, and should be so of us, At. 10. 34, 35. Doubtless there may be a diversity of Apprehension in the less weighty Matters of the Law, such as the Distinction of Meats and Days, and a Diversity of Practise accordingly, and yet a Sincerity of Mutual Love. according to the Law of Christ. Those who think it is not possible, should be content to speak for themselves on'y, and must believe there are those who have much Satisfaction in being able to fay, That they love the Image of Christ wherever they fee it, and highly value a good Man, tho' not in every thing of their Mind. He that casteth out Devils in Christ's Name, must be dear to us, tho be follows not us, Mark 9. 38. The Differences that are among Christians, tho' fomented by the Malice of Satan for the Ruin of Love, are permitted by the Wisdom of God for the Trial of Love, that they which are perfect therein may be made manifest. Herein a Christian commandeth his Love, when he loves those who differ from him, and joins in affection to those with whom he cannot concur in Opinion. This is thank-worthy: The Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink; they that have tasted of the Bread of Life, and the Water of life, know it is not; but it is Righteousness, and Peace, and H4

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152 Sights to be feen at the Lord's Supper.

Ty in the Holy Ghost: He therefore that in these rings serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and therefore the he esteem not our Days, the he relish not our Meats, he should be acceptable and dear to us.

I et us then in our Approach to this Sacrament, fir up our selves to Holy Love, Love without Dissimulation; let us bear those on our Hearts, wh m the great High Priest of our Profession bears on his; and as we are taught of God to love one another, let us increase therein more and more, I Thes. 4.9, 10. Christ's having loved us is a good reason why we should love; Christ's having loved our Brethren also, is a good reason why we should love them. Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is for Christians to be kindly affectioned one towards another, of one Heart, and of one Soul; were the Lord commands the Blessing, and gives samests of the Joys of that World, where Love is perfected, and reigns eternally.

CHAP. VIII.

24 Apt Some Account of the Affecting Sights that are

CARE being taken, by the Grace of God, to compose our selves into a serious Frame of Spirit, agreeable to the Ordinance, we must next apply our selves to that which is the proper Business of it, that we may do the Work of the Day in its Day, of the Hour in its Hour. And the first thing to be done is to contemplate that which is represented to us, and set before us there. This David aim'd at when he coveted to dwell in the House of the Lord

Sights to be seen at the Lord's Supper. 153 all the Days of his Life, that he might behold the Beauty of the Lord, Pfal. 27. 4. might fee his Power and his Glory, Pfal. 63. 2. To the Natural Man who receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, there appears in it nothing furprizing, nothing affecting, no form nor comeliness; but to that Faith which is the Substance and Evidence of things not seen, there appears a great sight, which like Moses, Exod. 3. 3. it will with a Holy Reverence. turn aside now to see. As therefore in our Preparation for this Ordinance, we should pray with Dovid, Open thou mine Eyes that I may see the wondrous things of thy Law and Gospel; so we should with Abraham, Gen. 15. 14. Lift up our Eyes now and look. I Suppose is is and Gen: 19!

When the Lamb that had been slain had taken the Book, and was going to open the Seals, St. John, who had the Honour to be a Witness in Vision of the Solemnity, was loudly call'd by one of the four living Creatures to come and see, Rev. 6. 1, 3, 5, 7. The same is the Call given to us, when in this Sacrament there is a Deor open'd in Heaven, and we are bidden to come up hither,

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L. In general, we are here call'd to fee the Lamb that had been flain, opening the Seals. This is the general Idea we are to have of the Ordinance: We would have thought our selves highly favour'd indeed, and beloved Disciples, if we had seen it in Vision as John did; behold we are all invited to fee it in a Sacramental Representation.

1. In this Ordinance is shew'd us the Lamb as it had been stain. John the Raptist pointed to him as the Lamb of God, and call'd upon his Followers to behold him, John 1.29. a Lamb design'd for Sacrifice, in order to the taking away of the Sins of the

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World,

154 Sights to be feen at the Lord's Supper.

World, a harmless spotless Lamb; but John the Divine goes further, and sees hm a Lamb slain, now sacrific'd for us, in the outer Court; and not only so, but appearing in the midst of the Throne, and of the four Beasts, and of the Elders, as if he were newly slain, bleeding afresh, and yet alive, and lives for evermore, Rev. 5.6.—r. 18. constantly presenting this Sacrifice within the Veil. The Blood of the Lamb always slowing, that it may still be sprinkled on our Consciences, to purify and pacify them, and may still speak in Heaven for us in that prevailing Intercession which the Lord Jesus ever lives to make there in the Virtue of his Satisfaction.

In this Ordinance the Lord's Death is shewed forth, 'tis shewed forth to us, that it may be shewed forth by us. Jefus Christ is here evidently let forth. orucified among us, Gal. 3. 1. that we may all with open Face behold as in a Glass, the Glory of God in the Face of Christ. Thus as Christ was the Lamb flain from the Foundation of the World, in the Types. and Prophecies of the Old Testament, and the Application of his Merits to the Saints that lived then; so he will be the Lamb flain to the End of the World, in the Word and Sacraments of the New Testament, and the Application of his Merits to the Saints that are now, and shall be in every Age. Still he is seen as a Lamb that had been slain, for this Sacrifice doth not like the Old Testament Sacrifices, decay and wax old.

This is the Sight, the great Sight we are here to fee, the Bush burning and yet not confum'd, for the Lord is in it, his People's God and Saviour. The Wounds of this Lamb are here open before us: Come see in Christ's Hands the very print of the Nails, see in his Side the very marks of the Spear. Behold him in his Agony, sweating as if it had been great drops of Blood falling to the Ground; then

Sights to be feen at the Lord's Supper. 155 accommodating himfelf to the Work he had undertaken; couching between two Burthens, and bowing his Shoulder to bear them. Behold him in his Bonds, when the Breath of our Nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their Pits, and he was bound that we might go out free. Behold him at the Bar, profecuted and condemned as a Criminal, because he was made Sin for us, and had undertaken to answer for our Misdemeanours. Behold him upon the Cross, enduring the Pain, and despising the Shame of the accursed Tree. Here's his Body broken, his Blood shed, his Soul pour'd out unto Death; all his Sufferings, with all their Aggravations, are here in fuch a manner as the Divine Wisdom faw fit, by an instituted Ordinance represented to us, and fer before us.

2. In this Ordinance is shew'd us the Lamb that was flain, opening the Seals of the Everlafting Gofpel, not only discovering to us the Glories of the Divine Light, but dispensing to us the Graces of the Divine Love: Opening the Seals of the Fountain of. Life, which had been long as a Spring flout up, and rolling away the Stone, that from thence we may draw Water with Foy: Opening the Seals of the Book of Life, that things hid from Ages and Generations might be manifested unto us, and we might know the things which are freely given us of God : Opening the Seals of God's Treasures, the un-Searchable Riches of Christ, which would have been feal'd up for ever from us, if we had not found out a way to supply and enrich us out of them: Opening the Seals of Heaven Gates, which had been thut and fealed against us, and confecrating for us a new and living way into the Holieft, by his own Blood. This is a glorious fight, and that which cannot but raife our Expectations of fomething further: This is the principal Sight given us in this Ordinance, but when we view this accurately,

we shall find there is that in it which Eye bath not seen, nor Ear heard.

- 2. In particular, we are here call'd to see many other things which we may infer from this general Representation of the Sufferings of Christ. 'Tis a very fruitful Subject, and that which will lead us to the consideration of divers things very profitable. When we come to this Sacrament, we should ask our selves the Question which Christ put to those that had been John's Hearers, What went ye out for to see? What do we come to the Lord's. Table to see? What do we come to the Lord's. Table to see? we come to see that which if God gives us the Eye of Faith to discern, it will be very affecting. Let this Voice therefore be still sounding in our Ears, Come and see.
- 1. Come and see the Evil of Sin. This we are concern'd to see, that we may be truly humbled for our Sins past, and may be firmly engag'd by Resolution and Holy Watchfulness against Sin for the future. 'Twas for our Transgressions that Christ was thus wounded, for our Iniquities that he was bruised; know therefore, O my Soul, and see, that it is an evil thing, and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts, Jer. 2. 19. That was a great Provocation to God, which nothing would atone for but such a Sacrisice; a dangerous Disease to us, which nothing would heal but such a Medicine. This is thy Wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine Heart. Jer. 4. 18.

Here Sin appears Sin, and by the Cross of Christ as well as by the Command of God, it becomes exceeding finful, Rom. 7. 13. The Malignity of its Nature was very great, and more than we can conceive or express; for it had made such a Breach between God and Man, as none less than

Sights to be feen at the Lord's Supper. 157
he who was both God and Man could repair; none
less than he durst undertake to be made Sin for us,
to become Surety for that Debt, and Intercessor for
such Offenders. 'Twas impossible that the Blood of
Bulls and Goats should take away Sin; the Stain was
too deep to be wash'd out so; Sacrifice and Offering
God did not desire, would not accept as sufficient to
purge us from it: No, the Son of God himself
must come to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself, or it will be for ever separate between us and
God.

Here Sin appears Death, and in the Cross of Christ shews it self exceeding burtful. Behold, my Soul, and see what Mischief Sin makes, by obferving how dear it cost the Redeemer when he undertook to fatisfy for it; how he fweat and groan'd, bled and dy'd, when the Lord laid upon him the Iniquity of us all. Look on Sin thro' this Glass, and it will appear in its true Colour, black and bloody, nothing can be more fo. The fatal Consequences of Sin are seen more in the Sufferings of Christ than in all the Calamities that it has brought upon the World of Mankind. O what a painful, what a shameful thing is Sin, which put the Lord Jesus to so much pain, to so much shame, then when he bore our Sins in his own Body upon the Tree!

See this (my Soul) with Application: 'Twas thy Sin, thy own Iniquity that lay so heavy upon the Lord Jesus when he cried out, my Soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto Death. 'Twas thy Pride and Passion, thy Worldliness and Uncleanness, the carnal Mind in thee, which is Enmity against God, that crown'd him with Thorns, and nail'd him to the Cross, and laid him for a time under the Sense of God's Withdrawings from him. Is this so? and shall I ever again make a mock at Sin? ever again make a light matter of that which Christ made

158 Sights to be seen at the Lord's Supper.

made so great a matter of? God forbid! Is it a small thing to weary Men, but have I by my Sin wearied my God also? Isa. 7. 13. Have I made him thus to serve, thus to suffer by my Sins? Isa. 43. 24. And shall I ever be reconciled to Sin again? Or shall I ever think a favourable Thought of it any more? No, by the Grace of God I never will. The Carnal Pleasure and Worldly Prosit that Sin can promise me, will never balance the Pain and

Shame that it put my Redeemer to.

Meditate Revenge (my Soul) a holy Revenge, fuch a Revenge as will be no Breach of the Law of Charity; fuch a Revenge as is one of the Fruits of Godly Sorrow, 2 Cor. 7. 11. If Sin was the Death of Christ, why should not I be the Death of Sin? When David lamented Saul and Fonathan, who were flain by the Archers of the Philistines (1 Sam. 31.3.) it is faid (2 Sam. 1. 18.) he taught the Children of Judah the use of the Bow, that they might averge the Death of their Princes upon their Enemies; let us thence receive Instruction: Did Sin, did my Sin crucify Christ? And shall not I crucify it? If it be ask'd, Why what Evil has it done? Say, it cost the Blood of the Son of God to expiate it; and therefore cry out so much the more. Crucify it. crucify it. And thus all that are Christ's have in some measure crucified the Flesh, Gal. 5. 24. As Christ dy'd for Sin, so must we dy to Sin.

2. Come and see the Justice of God. Many Ways the great Judge of the World hath made it to appear that he hates Sin, and both by the Judgments of his Mouth in the Written Word, and the Judgments of his Hand in the Course of his Providence, he hath reveal'd his Wrath from Heaven against all ungoddiness and unrighteousness of Men: 'Tis true that he is gracious and merciful, but it is as true that God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth, Nah.

Nah. 1. 2. God, even our God, is a consuming Fire, and will reckon for the Violation of his Laws, and the Injuries done to his Crown and Dignity. The Tenor of the Scripture from the fecond of Genesis to the last of the Revelation proves this: The Soul that sinneth, it shall die. In many remarkable Punishments of Sin, even in this Life, 'tis written as with a Sun-beam, so that he that runs may read that the Lord is righteous, 2 Chron. 12.6.

But never did the Justice of God appear so confipicuous, so illustrious as in the Death and Sufferings of Jesus Christ set before us in this Ordinance. Here his Righteousness is like the great Mountains, tho his Judgments are a great deep, Psal. 36. &. Come and see the Holy God shewing his Displeasure against Sin in the Death of Christ, more than in the Ruin of Angels, the Drowning of the Old World, the Burning of Sodom, the Destruction of Jerusalem; nay, more than in the Torments of Hell, all things consider'd.

(1.) God manifested his Justice, in demanding fuch a Satisfaction for Sin as Christ was to make by the Blood of his Cross. Hereby he made it to appear how great the Provocation was which was done him by the Sin of Man; that not only fuch an excellent Person must be chosen to intercede for us. but his Sufferings and Death must be infisted on to. atone for us. Sin being committed against an infinite Majesty, seems by this to have in it a kind of infinite Malignity, that the Remission of it could not be procurd, but by a Satisfaction of infinite Value. If meer Mercy had pardon'd Sin, without any Provision made to answer the Demands of injur'd Justice, God had declar'd his. Goodness; but when Jesus Christ is set forth to be a: Propitiation for Sin, and God is pleas'd to put hum160 Sights to be seen at the Lord's Supper.

Honour of his Government, in the forgiveness of Sins, this declares his Righteousness, it declares, Isay, at this time his Righteousness. See what an Emphasis the Apostle lays upon this, Rom. 3. 25, 26.

Sin had wrong'd God in his Honour, for he cannot otherwise be wrong'd by any of his Creatures; in breaking the Law we dishonour God; we Sin and come fort of his Glory. For this wrong Satisfaction must be made; that which first offers it felf is the Eternal Ruin of the Sinner; currat Lex; let the Sentence of the Law be executed, and thereby God may get him honour upon us, in lieu of that he should have had from us, Exod. 14. 17. But can no Expedient be found out to fatisfy God, and vet fave the Sinner? Is it not possible to offer an Equivalent? Will the Lord be pleas'd with thousands of Rams, or ten thousand Rivers of Oyl? Shall we give our First-Born for our Transgression, the Fruit of our Body for the Sin of our Soul? No, these are not tantamount: No, Submissions, Sorrows, Supplications, Services, or Sufferings of ours, can be look'd upon as a valuable Confideration for the Righteous God to proceed upon, in forgiving fuch Injuries, and restoring such Criminals to his Favour; the best we do is imperfect; the utmost we can do is already owing: Here therefore the Lord Jesus interposeth, undertakes to make a full Reparation of the Injury done to God's Glory by Sin; cloaths himself with our Nature, and becomes Surety for us. as Paul for Onesimus, Philem. 18, 19. If they have wronged thee or owe thee ought, put that on mine account, I have written it with my own Hand, with my own Blood, I will repay it. He was made Sin for 18, 2 Cor. 5. 21. a Curfe for us, Gal. 3. 13. an Offering for our Sin, Ifa. 53. 10. he bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree, I Pet. 2. 24. 2nd thus the Justice of God was not only fatisfied, but greatly.

Sights to be seen at the Lord's Supper. 161 greatly glorified. Come and see how bright it shines here.

(2.) God manifested his Justice in dealing as he did with him, who undertook to make Satisfaction. Having laid upon him the Iniquity of us all, he laid it home to him, for it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief, Isa. 53. 10. He was not only despised and rejected of Men, who knew him not, but he was stricken, smitten of God, and afflisted. The ancient way in which God testified his Acceptance of Sacrifices, was by confuming them with Fire from Heaven, (Lev. 9. 24. 2 Chron. 7. 1. 1 Kin. 18. 28.) The Wrath of God which the Offerers deserv'd, should have fallen upon them, fell upon the Offering; and so the Destruction of the Sacrifice was the Escape of the Sinner. Christ becoming a Sacrifice for us, the Fire of God's Wrath descended upon him, which troubled his Soul, put him into an Agony, and made him cry out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Come then and behold the Goodness and Severity of God, Rom. 11. 22. Christ being made Sin for us God did not spare him, Rom. 8. 32. By the determinate Counsel and Fore-knowledge of God, he was deliver'd to them, who with wicked Hands crucified and flew him. Awake O Sword, the Sword of Divine Justice, furbished and bath'd in Heaven; awake against my Shepherd, and against the Manthat is my Fellow, faith the Lord of Hosts, smite the Shepherd, Zech. 13.7.

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is it Let us look on the Sufferings of Christ, and say as he himself hath taught us; Luke 23. 31. If this be done in the Green Tree, what shall be done in the Dry? What was done to him shews what should have been done to us if Christ had not interposed, and what will be done to us if we reject him. If this were done to the Son of God's Love, what shall be done to the Generation of his Wrath? If this

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162 Sights to be seen at the Lord's Supper.

were done to one that had but Sin imputed to him, who as he had no Corruptions of his own for Satan's Temptations to fasten upon, so he had no Guilt of his own for God's Wrath to fasten upon, who was as a Green Tree, not apt to take Fire: What shall be done to those who have Sin inharent in them, which makes them as a Dry Tree, combustible, and proper Fuel for the Fire of God's Wrath? If this were done to one that had done fo much good, what shall be done to us that have done so little? If the Lord Jesus himself was put into an agony by the things which were done to him, was forrowful and very heavy, can our Hearts endure, or can our Hands be strong when God shall deal with us? Ezek. 22. 14. Who would set the Briars and Thorns against him in Battle? From the Sufferings of Christ we may easily infer what a fearful thing it is to fall into the Hands of the Living God, Heb. 10. 31.

3. Come and fee the Love of Christ. This is that which with a peculiar regard we are to observe and contemplate in this Ordinance; where we fee Christ and him crucified, we cannot but see the Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge. When Christ did but drop a Tear over the Grave of Lazarus, the Fews faid, See how he loved him, John 11.36. much more reason have we to say when we commemorate the shedding of his Blood for us, See how he loved us. Greater Love hath no Man than this, to lay down his Life for his Friend. Thus Christ hath loved us; nay, he laid down his Life for us when we were Enemies, John 15. 13. Rom. 5. 8. Herein is Love, Love without Precedent, Love without Parallel. Come and see the Wonders of this Love.

(1.) It was Free Love. Christ gave himself for us, and what more free than Gift ? Twas free, for it was unask'd; nothing cry'd for this Mercy, but our own Milery; when no Eye pitied us, of his own good Will he relieved us; faid to us when we were in our blood, Live, yea, he said to us, Live: That was a time of Love indeed. 'Twas free, for it was unmerited; there was nothing in us defireable, nothing promising; the Relation we stood in to God as Creatures, did but aggravate our Rebellion, and make us the more obnoxious. As he could not obtain any Advantage by our Happiness, so he would not have sustained any Damage by our Misery: If there were no profit in our Block (which is pleaded, Psal. 30. 9.) yet for certain there would have been no loss by it. No, but the Reasons of his Love were fetch'd from within himfelf, as God's Love of Ifrael was, Deut. 7.7.8. He loved them, because he would love them. --- 'Twas free, for it was unforced: He willingly offered himfelf. Here am I, fend me. This Sacrifice was bound to the Horns of the Altar, only with the Cords of his own Love.

(2.) It was distinguishing Love. 'Twas Good Will to Fallen Man, and not to Fallen Angels. He did not lay hold on a World of Sinking Angels, as their Tree fell, so it lies, and so it's like to lie for ever, but on the Seed of Abraham he taketh hold, Heb. 2. 16. The Nature of Angels was more excellent than that of Man, their Place in the Creation higher, their Capacity for honouring God greater, and yet they were passed by. Man that sin'd was pitied and help'd, while Angels that sin'd were not so much as spar'd. The deplorable State of Devils serves as a Foyl to set off the

Blessed State of the Ransomed of the Lord.

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\$64 Sights to be feen at the Lord's Supper.

(3.) It was condescending Love. Never did Love humble it felf and floop fo low as the Love of Christ did. 'Twas great Condescension, that he should pitch his Love upon Creatures fo mean, Man that is a Worm, the Son of Man that is a Worm, fo near a-kin to the Brutal part of the Creation, especially fince the Fall, that one would think he should rather be the Scorn than the Love of the Spiritual and purely Intellectual World; yet this is the Creature that's chosen to be the Darling of Heaven, and in whom Wisdom's Delights are, Prov. 8. 31. But especially that in prosecution of this Love, he should humble himself as he did. Humble himself to the Earth in his Incarnation; Humble himself on the Earth in the Meannels of his Life; Humble himself into the Earth, when he went to the Grave, the place where Mankind appears under the greatest Mortification and Disgrace.

(4.) Twas Expensive Love. His washing the Feet of his Disciples is spoken of as an Act of Love to them, John 13. 1. and that was condescending Love, but not costly like this. He lov'd us and bought us, and paid dear for us, that we might be unto him a purchased People, 1 Pet. 2. 9. Because he loved Israel, he gave Men for them, and People for their Life, even Egypt for their ransom, Isa. 43. 3, 4. But because he loved us, he gave himself for us, even his own Blood for the Ransom of our

Souls.

(5.) 'Twas strong Love, strong as Death, and which many Waters could not quench, Cant. 8. 6, 7. This was the Greatness of his Strength, in which the Redeemer travelled, who is mighty to save, Isa. 63. 1. 'Twas strong to break thro' great Dissiculties, and trample upon the Discoaragements that lay in his way: When he had this Baptism to be baptis'd with, this Baptism of Blood, 'twas Love that said, How am I straitned till it be accomplished?

Sights to be seen at the Lord's Supper. 165
plished? Luke 12. 50. 'Twas Love that said,
With Desire have I desired to eat this Passover, which
he knew was to be his last. 'Twas the Strength
of his Love that reconcil'd him to the bitter Cup,
which was put into his Hand, and made him wave
his Petition, that it might pass from him, which,
for ought we know, if he had insisted upon, it
had been granted, and the Work undone.

(6.) Twas an Everlasting Love, Jer. 31. 3. Twas from Everlasting in the Counsels of it, and will be to Everlasting in the Consequences of it; not like our Love, which comes up in a Night, and perisheth in a Night. He loved to the end, and went on with his Undertaking till he said, It is finished. Never was there such a constant Lover as the Blessed Jesus, whose Gifts and Callings are without

Repentance.

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4. Come and fee the Conquest of Satan: And this is a very pleafing Sight to all those who thro' Grace are turned from the Power of Satan unto God, as it was to the Israelites when they had newly shaken off the Egyptian Yoke, to see their Tafk-Mafters and Purfuers dead upon the Sea-shore, Exed. 14. 30. Come and see our Joseun discomfiting the Amalekites, our David with a Sling and a Stone, vanquishing that proud Goliah, who not only himfelf basely deserted, but then boldly desied the Armies of the living God ... Come and fee not Michael and his Angels, but Michael himself, Michael our Prince, who trod the Wine-press alone, entring the Lists with the Dagon and his Angels, and giving them an effectual Overthrow: The Seed of the Woman, tho' bruised in the Heel, yet breaking the Serpent's Head, according to that ancient Promife made unto the Fathers, Gen. 3. 15. Come and fee the Great Redeemer not only making Peace with Earth, but making War with Hell; dispossessing 166 Sights to be seen at the Lord's Supper.

the strong Man armed, spoiling Principalities and Powers, making a shew of them openly, and triumpk-

ing over them in his Crofs, Col. 2. 15.

Come and fee Christ triumphing over Satan at his Death. Tho' the War was in Heaven (Rev. 12. 7.) yet some Fruits of the Victory even then appear'd on Earth. Tho' when Christ was in the Extremity of his Sufferings, there was Darkness over all the Land, which gave the Powers of Darkness all the Advantage they could wish for, yet he beat the Enemy upon his own Ground. Satan (some think) terrified Christ in his Agony, but then he kept Possession of his own Soul, and steddily adher'd to his Father's Will, and to his own Undertaking: So he baffled Satan. Satan put it into the Heart of Judas to betray him, but in the immediate Ruin of Judas, who presently went and hang'd himself, Christ triumphing over Satan, and made a hew of him openly. Satan tempted Peter to deny Christ, desiring to have him, that he might sift him as Wheat, but by the speedy Repentance of Peter. who upon a look from Christ, went out and wept bitterly, Christ triumph'd over Satan, and bassled him in his Defigns. Satan was ready to swallow up the Thief upon the Cross, but Christ rescued him from the Gates of Hell, and rais'd him to the Glories of Heaven, and thereby spoiled Satan, who was as a Lion disappointed of his Prey.

Come and see Christ triumphing over Satan by his Death; the true Samson, that did more towards the Ruin of the Philistines dying than living: See Jud. 16.23. Having by his Life and Doctrine destroyed the Works of the Devil, at length by his Death he destroyed the Devil himself, that had the Power of Death, Heb. 2. 14. In him was fulfill'd the Blessing of the Tribe of Gad, Gen. 49. 19. a Troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last; and thro' him that loved us we are Conquerours, yea, more than Conquerours. (1.)

(1.) Christ by dying made atonement for Sin, and fo conquer'd Satan. By the Merit of his Death he satisfied God's Justice for the Sins of all that should believe in him, and if the Judge remit the Sentence, the Executioner hath nothing to do with the Prisoner. We were ready to fall under the Curfe, to be made an Anathema, that is, to be deliver'd unto Satan: Christ said, upon me be the Curse; this blotted out the Hand-writing that was against us, took that out of the way, nail'd that to the Cross, and so Satan is spoil'd. Who shall condemn? it is Christ that died, Rom. 8. 33, 34. When God forgives the iniquity of his People, he brings back their Captivity, Pfal. 85. 1, 2. If we shall not come into Condemnation, we are fav'd from coming into Execution.

(2.) Christ by dying, seal'd the Gospel of Grace, and purchas'd the Spirit of Grace, and so conquer'd Satan. The Spirit acting by the Gospel as the Instrument, and the Gospel animated by the Spirit as the Principal, are become mighty to the pulling down of Satan's Strong-holds. Thus a Foundation is laid for a Believer's Victory over the Temptations and Terrors of the wicked one. Christ's Victory over Satan is our Victory, and we overcome him by the Blood of the Lamb, Rev. 12. 11. Thus Kings of Armies did flee apace, and even they that tarried at home, and did themselves contribute nothing to the Victory, yet divide the Spoil, Pfal. 68. 12. having thus trodden Satan under our Feet, he calls to us as Joshua to the Captains of Israel, Josh. 10. 24. Come near, put your Feet upon the Necks of thefe Kings: Resist the Devil, and he shall slee from you, for he is a conquer'd Enemy.

5. Come and see the Worth of Souls: We judge of the value of a thing by the Price which a wise

168 Sights to be Seen at the Lord's Supper.

Man that understands it, gives for it. He that made Souls, and had reason to know them, provided for their Redemption, not corruptible things, as Silver and Gold, but the precious Blood of his own Son. See 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. 'Twas not a Purchase made hastily, for it was the Contrivance of Infinite Wisdom from Eternity; 'twas not made for necessity, for he neither needed us, nor could be benefited by us; but thus he was pleas'd to teach us what account we should make of our own Souls, and their Salvation and Happiness. The Incarnation of Christ put a great Honour upon the Humane Nature; never was it so dignified as when it was taken into Union with the Divine Nature in the Person of Immanuel; but the Death and Sufferings of Christ add much more to its value; for he laid down his own Life to be the Ransom of ours, when nothing else was sufficient to answer the Price. Lord what is Man that he should be thus visited, thus regarded! That the Son of God should not only dwell among us, but dy for us!

Now (1.) Let us fee this, and learn how to put a value upon our own Sculs; not so as to advance our Conceit of our felves; nothing can be more humbling and abasing than to see our Lives fold by our own Folly, and redeem'd by the Merit of another; but fo as to increase our Concern for our selves, and our own Spiritual Interests. Shall the Souls, the precious Souls which Christ put such a value upon, and paid such a Price for, debase and undervalue themselves so far as to become Slaves to Saran, and Drudges to the World and the Flesh? We are bought with a price, and therefore we not only injure the Purchaser's Right to us, if we alienate our selves to another, but we reproach his Wisdom in paying such a Price, if we alienate our selves for a thing of nought. 'Tis the Apoltle's Argument against

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Sights to be seen at the Lord's Supper. 169

Uncleanness, 1 Cor. 6. 20. and against making our selves the Servants of Men, 1 Cor. 7. 23. Christ having purchased our Souls at such a rate, we disparage them if we stake them to the Trisles of this World, or pawn them for the base and sordid Pleasures of Sin. Shall that Birth-right be sold for a Mess of Pottage, which Christ bought with his own Blood? No, while we live let our Souls be our Darlings (as they are call'd Psal, 22. 20. 35. 17.) for his sake to whom they were so dear. If Christ did and suffer'd so much to save our Souls, let not us hazzard the losing of them, tho' it be to

gain the whole World, Mat. 16.26.

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(2.) Let us fee this, and learn how to put a value upon the Souls of others. This forbids us to do any thing that may turn to the Prejudice of the Souls of others, by drawing them to Sin, or difcouraging them in that which is good. The Apoftle lays a great stress upon this Argument, against the Abuse of our Christian Liberty, to the Offence of others. Rom. 14. 15. Destroy not him with thy Meat for whom Christ died; and again he tirges it on the same Occasion, 1 Cor. 8. 11. Shall not we deny our felves and our own Satisfaction rather than occasion Guilt or Grief to them, for whom Christ humbled himself, even to the Death of the Cross? Shall we flight those whom Christ put fuch a value upon? Shall we fet those with the Dogs of our Flock, whom Christ purchas'd with his own Blood among the Lambs of his Flock? God forbid.

This also commands us to do all we can for the Spiritual Welfare and Salvation of the Souls of others: Did Christ think them worth his Blood, and shall not we think them worth our Care and Pains? Shall not we willingly do our utmost to save a Soul from Death, and thereby hide a Multitude of Sins when Christ did so much, and suffer'd

170 Sights to be feen at the Lord's Supper.

fo much to make it feafible? Shall not we pour out our Prayers for them, for whom Christ pour'd out his Soul unto Death? And bear them upon our Hearts whom Christ laid so near his? Blessed Paul in consideration hereof, not only made himself the Servant of all, to please them for their Ediscation, but was willing to be offer'd upon the Sacrifice and Service of their Faith, Phil. 2. 17. and so to fill up what was behind of the Afflictions of Christ for his Bodies sake, Col. 1. 24. And if we be at any time call'd upon even to lay down our Lives for the Brethren, we must remember that in that, as well as in washing their Feet, Christ hath left us an Example, 1 John 3. 16.

- 6. Come and see the Purchase of the Blessings of the New Covenant. The Blood of Christ was not only the Ransome of our forfeited Lives, and the Redemption of our Souls from Everlasting Misery, but it was the valuable Consideration, upon which the Grant of Eternal Life and Happiness is grounded. Christ's Death is our Life, that is, it is not only our Salvation from Death, but it is the Fountain of all our Joys, and the Foundation of all our Hopes. All the Comforts we have in possession, and all we have in prospect, all the Priviledges of our way, and all those of our Home, are the Blessed Fruits of that accursed Tree on which our Redeemer died.
- which all the Blessings of the Covenant flow. That's the Price of all our Pardons, we have Redemption thro' his Blood, even the forgiveness of Sins, Eph. 1.7. without the shedding of Blood, that Blood, that precious Blood, there had been no Remission. That's the Purchase of the Divine Favour, which is our Life, we are made accepted only in the Beloved,

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Sights to be seen at the Lord's Supper. 171

Eph. 1. 6. Peace is made, a Covenant of Peace settled, and Peace secur'd to all the Sons of Peace, by the Blood of his Cross, and not otherwise, Col. 1. 20. That's the Price paid for the Purchased Possession, that they which are call'd might receive the Promise of Eternal Inheritance, Heb. 9. 15. Christ was made a Curse for us, not only to redeem us from the Curse of the Law, but that we thro' him might inherit the Blessing, Gal. 3. 13, 14. Thus out of the Eater comes forth Meat, and out of the Strong

Sweetness. Behold he shews us a Mystery.

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2. See the Blood of Christ, the Stream in which all the Bleffings of the Covenant flow to us. The Blood of Christ, as it is exhibited to us in this Ordinance, is the Vehicle, the Chanel of Conveyance by which all Graces and Comforts descend from Heaven to Earth. This Cup is the New Testament in the Blood of Christ, and so it becomes a Cup of Blessing, a Cup of Consolation, a Cup of Salvation: All the hidden Manna comes to us in this Dew. 'Tis the Blood of Christ speaking for us, that pacifies are offended God: "Tis the Blood of Christ Sprinkled on us, that purifies a defiled Conscience. As it was the Blood of Jesus that consecrated for us the new and living way, and open'd the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers, fo it is by that Blood that we have boldness to enter into the bolieft, Heb. 10. 19, 20.

Come and see how much we owe to the Death of Christ, the rich Purchases he made for us, that he might cause us to imberit Substance, and might fill our Treasures. Let this increase our esteem of the Love of Christ, which was not only so very expensive to himself, but so very advantagious to us. Let this also enhance the value of Covenant Blessings in our Eyes. The Blessings of this life we owe to the Bounty of God's Providence, but Spiritual Blessings in Heavenly Things we owe to

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the Blood of his Son: Let these therefore be to us more precious than Rubies: Let these always have the Preserence: Let us be willing to part with any thing rather than hazzard the Favour of God, the Comforts of the Spirit, and Eternal Life, remembring what these cost. Let us never make light of Wisdom's Preparations, when we see at what rate they were bought in. To them who believe, they are precious, for they know they were purchased with the precious Blood of Christ, which we undervalue as a common thing, if we preser Farms and Merchandise before Heaven and the present Earnests of it

CHAP. IX.

Some Account of the Precious Benefits which are to be received by Faith in this Ordinance.

IN the Lord's Supper we not only show the Lord's Death, and see what is to be seen in it, as many who when he was upon the Cross, stood afar off bebolding: No, we must there be more than Spectators, we must eat of the Sacrifice, and so partake of the Altar, 1 Cor. 11. 18. The Bread which came down from Heaven, was not design'd meerly for Show-bread, Bread to be look'd upon, but for Houshold-bread, Bread to be fed upon. Bread to strengthen our Hearts, and Wine to make them glad, and Wisdom's Invitation is, Come, eat of my Bread, and drink of the Wine that I have mingled. Christ's feeding great Multitudes miraculously, more

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more than once, when he was here upon Earth, was (as his other Miracles) fignificant of the Spiritual Provision he makes in the Everlasting Gofpel, for the Support and Satisfaction of those that leave all to follow him: If we do not all eat, and be not all filled, abundantly satisfied with the Goodness of his House, it is our own fault. Let not us then straiten and starve our selves, for the Master of the Feast has not stinted us: He has not only invited us, and made Provision for our Entertainment, but he calls to us, as one that bids us heartly Welcome, Eat O Friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved, Cant. 6. 1.

All People are for what they can get: Here is fomething to be got in this Ordinance, if it be rightly improv'd, which will turn to our Account infinitely more than the Merchandise of Silver, or the Gain of fine Gold. Christ and all his Benefits are here not only set before us, but offer'd to us; not only offer'd to us, but settled upon us under certain Proviso's, and Limitations; so that a Believer who sincerely consents to the Covenant, receives some of the present Benefit of it in and by this Ordinance; both in the comfortable Experiences of Communion with God in Grace, and the comfortable Expectations of the Vision and Fruition

Gofpel Ordinances in general (and this in particular, which is the Seal of Gospel Promises) are Wells of Salvation, out of which we may draw Water with Joy; Brests of Consolation, from which we may suck and be satisfied. Golden Pipes throwhich the Oyl of Grace is deriv'd from the Good Olive, to keep our Lamps burning; we receive the Grace of God herein in vain, if we take not what is here tender'd; Gospel Blessings upon Gospel Terms. We are here to receive Christ Jesus the Lord, and since with him God freely gives us all

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things,

things, Rom. 8.32. we must with him by Faith, take what he gives; all Spiritual Blessings in Heavenly Things by Christ Jesus.

First, Here we may receive the Pardon and Forgiveness of our Sins. This is that great Bleffing of the New Covenant, which makes way for all other Bessings (removendo probibens) by taking down that Wall of Partition which separated between us and God, and hinder good things from us: 'Tis the matter of that Promise which comes in as a Reason for all the reft; I will do fo and fo for them, for I will be merciful to their Unrighteousness, Heb. 8. II. --- This is that great Bleffing which Christ dy'd to purchase for us; his Blood was shed for many for the Remission of Sins; and perhaps he intimated this to be in a special manner design'd by him in his Sufferings, when the first Word we find recorded, that he spoke after he was nail'd to the Cross, was, Father, forgive them, Luke 23. 34. which feems to look not only to those that had an immediate Hand in his Death, but to those that are remotely accessary to it, as all Sinners are, tho' they know not what they do.

The Everlasting Gospel is an Ast of Indemnity, an Ast of Oblivion we may call it, for it is promiss'd that our Sins and Iniquities he will remember no more; 'tis indeed an Ast of Grace; Repentance and Remission of Sins is by it published in Christ's Name to all Nations. 'Tis proclaim'd to the Rebels, that if they will lay down their Arms, acknowledge their Offence, return to their Allegiance, approve themselves good Subjects for the suture, and make the Merits of him whom the Father hath appointed to be the Mediator, their Plea in suing out their Pardon, the offended Prince will be reconcil'd to them, their Attainder shall be revers'd, and they shall not only be restor'd to all the

the Privileges of Subjects, but advanc'd to the Honours and Advantages of Favourites. Now it concerns us all to be able to make it out that we are entitled to the Benefit of this Act; that we are qualified according to the Tenor of it, for the Favour intended by it; and if we be so indeed, in the Lord's Supper we receive that Pardon to us in particular, which in the Gospel is proclaim'd to all in general. We do here receive the Atonement, as the Expression is, Rom. 5. 11. God hath receiv'd it for the securing of his Honour, and we receive it for the securing of our Happiness and Comfort; we claim the Benesit of it, and desire to be justified

and accepted of God for the fake of it.

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This Sacrament should therefore be receiv'd with a Heart thus lifting up it felf to God; Lord I am a Sinner, a great Sinner; I have done very foolishly; I have forfeited thy Favour, incurr'd thy Displeasure, and deserve to be for ever abandon'd from thee. But Christ bas dy'd, yea, rather is risen again; hath finished Transgression, made an end of Sin, made Reconciliation for Iniquity, and brought in an Everlasting Righteousness; he gave his Life a Ransome for many, and if for many, why not for me? In him a free and full Remission is promiss'd to all penitent and obedient Believers; by him all that believe are justified, and to them there is no Condemnation. Thou, even thou art he that blottest out their Transgressions for thine own sake, and art gracious and merciful, nay, thou art faithful and just to forgive them their Sins. Lord, I repent, I believe, and take the Benefit of those Promises, those exceeding great and precious Promises, which are to my Soul as Life from the Dead. I fly to this City of Refuge, I take hold of the Horns of this Altar: Here, I humbly receive the Forgiveness of my Sins, thre Jesus Christ, the great Propitiation; to whom I intirely owe it, and to whom I acknowledge my 14

felf infinitely indebted for it, and under the higheft Obligations imaginable to love him and live to him. He is the Lord our Righteousness, so I accept him, let him be made of God to me Righteousness, and I have enough, I am happy for ever.

Every time we come to the Lord's Supper, we come to receive the Remission of Sins, that is,

r. A renewed Pardon of daily Trespasses. In many things we offend daily, and even he that is washed, that is in a justified State, needs to wash his Fect, 1 John 3. 10. and bleffed be God there is a Fountain open'd for us to wash in, and Encouragment given to pray for Daily Pardon as duly as we do for Daily Bread. We have to do with a God that multiplies to pardon. Lord, the Guilt of such a Sin lies upon me like a heavy Burthen; I have lamented it, confess'd it, renew'd my Covenants rgainst it, and now in this Ordinance I receive the Forgiveness of that Sin, and hear it said to my Soul, The Lord bath put away thy Sin, thou shalt not die. Many a Fault I have been overtaken in fince I was last with the Lord at his Table, and having repented of them, I defire to apply the Blood of Christ to my Soul in a particular manner, for the forgivenels of them.

2. A Confirmed Pardon of all Trespasses. I come here to receive further Assurances of the Forgiveness of my Sins, and further Comfort arising from those Assurances. I come to hear again that Voice of Joy and Gladness, which hath made many a broken Bone to rejoice, Son, Daughter, be of good chear, thy Sins are forgiven thee; I come for the Father's Kiss to a returning Prodigal, which seals his Pardon so as to silence his Doubts and Fears. When God would by his Prophets speak comfortably to Sion, this he saith, Thy Warfare is accomplished,

thine.

thine Iniquity is pardon'd, Isa. 40. 2. And the Inhabitant shall not say, I am sick, that is, he shall see no cause to complain of any outward Calamity, if his Iniquity be for given, Isa. 33. 24. O that I might here have the White Stone of Absolution (Rev. 2.17.) and my Pardon written more legibly! O that Christ would say to me as he did to that Woman, to whom much was already for given, Luk. 7. 48. Thy Sins are for given. This is that I come to receive, O let me not go away without it!

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Secondly, Here we may receive the Adoption of Sons. The Covenant of Grace not only frees us from the Doom of Criminals, but advanceth us to the Dignity of Children; Christ redeem'd us from the Curse of the Law in order to this, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons, Gal. 4. 5. The Children's Bread given us in this Ordinance, is as it were Livery and Seisin, to assure us of our Adoption upon the Terms of the Gospel, that if we will take God in Christ to be to us a Father, to rule and dispose of us, and to be fear'd and honour'd by us, he will take us to be his Sons and Daughters. Behold what manner of - Love this is! Be aftonish'd O Heavens, and wonder O Earth! Never was there such compassionate, such cordescending Love! God here seals us the Grant both of the Priviledges of Adoption, and the Spirit of Adoption.

I. Here's a Grant of the Priviledges of Adoption seal'd to us. Here we are called the Children of God, and he calls himself our Father, and encourages us to call him so. Seemeth it to you a light thing (said David, I Sam. 18 23.) to be a King's Son-in-Law, seeing that I am a poor Man, and I ghtly esteemed? And shall it not seem to us a great thing, an Honour infinitely above all those which

Worms of the Earth, and a Generation of Vipers, Children of Disobedience and Wrath by Nature, to be the adopted Children of the King of Kings? This Honour have all the Saints. Nor is it an empty Title that is here granted us, but real Advan-

tages of unspeakable value.

The Eternal God here saith it, and seals it to every true Believer, Fear not, I will be a Father to thee, an ever-loving, ever-living Father. Leave it to me to provide for thee, on me let all thy Burthens be cast, with me let all thy Cares be left, and to me let all thy Requests be made known. The young Lions shall lack and suffer hunger, but thou shalt want nothing that is good for thee, nothing that is fit for thee. My Wisdom shall be thy Guide, my Power thy support, and underneath thee the Everlasting Arms. As the render Father pities his Children, so will I pity thee, and Spare thee as a Man spares his Son that serves him. Thou shalt have my Bleffing and Love, the Smiles of my Face. and the Kiffes of my Mouth, and in the Arms of my Grace will I carry thee to Glory, as the nursing Father doth the fucking Child. Doth any thing grieve thee? Whither should'st thou go with thy Complaint but to thy Father? faying to him as that Child, 2 Kin. 4. 9. My Head, my Head, and thou shalt find, that as one whom his Mother comforteth, so will the Lord thy God comfort thee. Doth any thing terrify thee? Be not afraid, for I am thy God: When thou paffest thro' the Waters, I will be with thee, and thro' the Rivers they shall not overflow thee. Art thou in doubt? Consult me, and I will instruct thee in the way that thou shalt go, I will guide thee with mine Eye. Acknowledge me and I will direct thy Steps. Dost thou offend? Is there Foolishness bound up in thy Heart? Thou must expect Fatherly Correction; I will chaften thee with the the Rod of Men, and with the Stripes of the Sons of Men, but my loving Kindness will I not utterly take from thee: Thine Afflictions shall not only consist with, but flow from Covenant Love; and but for a Season, when need is, shalt thou be in hea-

viness.

I will be a Father to thee, and Son thou shalt be ever with me, and all that I have is thine; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the World, or Life, or Death, or things present, or things to come, all are thine, as far as is necessary to thine happines, nor shall any thing be ever able to separate thee from my Love. I will be a Father to thee, and then Christ shall be thy Elder Brother, the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Family, as the First-born among many Brethren. Angels shall be thy Guard, with the greatest Care and Tenderness shall they bear thee in their Arms, as ministring Spirits charg'd to attend the Heirs of Salvation. Providence shall be thy Protector, and the Disposer of all thine Affairs for the best; so that whatever happens, thou may'ft be fure it shall be made to work for thy good, tho' as yet thou can'ft not fee how or which way. The Affurances of thy Father's Love to thee in his Promises, and Communion with him in his Ordinances, shall be thy daily Bread, thy continual Feast the Manna that shall be rain'd upon thee, the Water out of the Rock that shall follow thee in this Wilderness, till thou come to Canaan.

Now art thou a Child of God; but it doth not yet appear what thou shalt be; when thou wast predestinated to the Adoption of Sons, thou wast design'd for the Inheritance of Sons; if a Child, then an Heir. Thy present Maintenance shall be homourable and comfortable, and such as is fit for thee in thy Minority, while thou art under Tutors and Governours; but what is now laid out upon thee, is nothing in comparison with what is laid up

for thee; an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away. If God be thy Father, no less than a Crown, a Kingdom shall be thy Portion, and Heaven thy Home, where thou shalt be for ever with him: In thy Father's House there are many Mansions, and one for thee, if thou be his dutiful Child. 'Tis thy Father's good Pleasure to give thee thy Kingdom.

2. Here's a Grant of the Spirit of Adoption seal'd to us. As the giving of Christ for us was the great Promise of the Old Testament, which was fulfill'd in the fulness of time; so the giving of the Spirit to us is the great Promise of the New Testament, and a Promise that is sure to all the Seed : This Promise of the Father which we have heard of Christ, we in this Ordinance wait for, Act. 1. 4. And it follows upon the former, for wherever God gives the Priviledges of Children, he will give the Nature and Disposition of Children; Regeneration always attends Adoption; Because ye are Sons, God hath fent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, Gal. 4. 6. Great Encouragement we have to ask this Gift, from the Relation of a Father wherein God stands towards us: If Earthly Parents know how to give good Gifts to their Children, fuch are as needful and proper for them, much more Mall our Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him, Luk. 11.13. He will give the Spirit to teach his Children, and as their Tutor, to liad them into all Truth; to govern his Children. and as the best of Guardians, to dispose their Affections, while Providence disposeth their Affairs for the best. He will give his Spirit to renew and fanctify them, and to make them meet for their Father's Service in this World, and their Father's Kingdom in a better World; to be the Guide of their Way, and the Witness of their Adop-

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Adoption, and to feal them to the Day of Re-

demption.

An Earnest of this Grant of the Spirit to all Believers in this Ordinance, Christ gave when in the first Visit he made to his Disciples after his Refurrection, having hew'd them his Hands and his Side, his pierced Hands, his pierced Side (which in effect he doth to us in this Sacrament) he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghoft, John 20. 22. What he said to them, he faith to all his Disciples, making them an Offer of this inestimable Gift, and bestowing it effectually on all Believers, who are all fealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise, Eph. 1. 13. Receive ye the Holy Ghost then, in the receiving of this Bread and Wine; the Graces of the Spirit, as Bread to strengthen the Heart: his Comforts, as Wine to make it glad. Be willing and defirous to receive the Holy Ghoft, let the Soul and all its Powers be put under his Operations and Influences: Lift up your Heads O ye Gates, and be ye lift up ye Everlasting Doors, and then this King of Glory shall come in, to all that invite him, and will bid him welcome.

But will God in very deed thus dwell with Men, with such Men upon the Earth? and shall they become Temples of the Holy Ghost? shall he come upon them? shall the Power of the Highest overshadow them? shall Christ be formed in me a Holy Thing? say then (my Soul) say as the Blessed Virgin did, Here I am, be it unto me according to this Word. I acknowledge my self unworthy the Being of a Man, having so often acted more like a Brute; much more unworthy the Dignity of a Son: I have been an undutiful rebellious Prodigal, I deserve to be turn'd out of Doors, abandon'd and disinherited, and sorbidden my Father's House and Table; but who shall set Bounds to Insinite Mercy, and to the Compassions of the Everlasting

Father? If notwithstanding this, he will yet again take me into his Family, and cloath me with the Best Robe, tho' 'tis too great a Favour for me to receive, who am a Child of Disobedience, yet not too great for him to give, who is the Father of Mercies. To thee therefore, O God, I give up my self; and I will from this time cry unto thee, My Father, thou art the Guide of my Youth, Jer. 3. 4. Tho' I deferve not to be own'd as a hired Servant, I desire and hope to be own'd as an adopted Son. Be it unto thy Servant according to the Promise.

Thirdly, Here we may receive Peace and Satiffaction in our own Minds. This is one of those precious Legacies Christ hath lest to all his Followers, and it is here in this Ordinance paid, or fecur'd to be paid, to all those that are ready and willing to receive it; John 14. 27. Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you, such a Peace as the World can neither give nor take away. This is the Repose of the Soul in God; our Reconciliation to our felves arising from the Sense of our Reconciliation to God: The Conscience being purged from dead Works, which not only defile, but disturb and disquiet us. When the Spirit is pour'd out from on high, then the Work of Righteoufness is Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness Quietness and Affurance for ever, Ifa. 32. 15, 17. The Guilt of Sin lays the Foundation of Trouble and Uneafiness; where that is remov'd by Pardoning Mercy, there is Ground for Peace; but there must be a further Act of the Divine Grace to put us in the actual Poffession of that Peace: When he who alone can open the Ear to comfort, as well as Difcipline, makes us to hear Joy and Gladness, then the storm ceaseth, and there is a calm. The Mind that was difturb'd with the Dread of God's Wrath, is quiered with the Tokens of his Favour and Love. This This we should have in our Eye at the Lord's Table; here I am waiting to hear what God the Lord will speak, and hoping that he who speaks Peace to his People and to his Saints, will speak that Peace to me, who make it the top of my Ambition to answer the Character, and have the Lot of his People and Saints. This Peace we may here expect to receive for two Reasons.

1. Because this Ordinance is a Seal of the Promise of Peace: In it God affures us that his Thoughts towards us are Thoughts of Peace, Fer. 29. 11. and then ours towards our felves may be fo; we are here among his People, whom he hath promis'd to bless with Peace, Pfal. 29. 11. and we may apply that Promise to our selves, plead it, and humbly claim the Benefit of it. This is that Rest to the Soul, which our Master hath promis'd to all those that come to him, and take his Yoke upon them, Mat. 11. 28, 29. and this Promise among the rest is here ratified as Yea and Amen in Chrift. Covenant of Grace is a Covenant of Peace, in the bleffed Soil of which Light is fown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the Upright in Heart, Psal. 97. 11. And this Covenant of Peace is that which Eternal Truth hath faid, Shall never be removed, but shall stand firm as a Rock when the Everlasting Mountains shall melt like Wax, and the perpetual Hills shall bow, Isa. 50. 10. Hath God so far consulted my present Repose as well as my future Blifs, that he hath provided not only for the Satisfaction of his own Justice, but for the Satisfaction of my Conscience, and shall I indulge my own Disturbance, and refuse to be comforted? No, welcome the promis'd Peace, the Calm fo long wish'd for, the desir'd Haven of a troubled Spirit, toffed with Tempests; come my Soul, and take Possession of this Canaan; by Faith enter into this Reft, and let not thine own Unbelief exclude thee, Heb.4.3. If the God of Peace himself speak Peace, tho' with a still small Voice, let that silence the most noisy and clamorous Objections of Doubts and Fears; and if he give quietness,

let not them make Trouble, Job 34. 29.

2. Because this Ordinance is an instituted means of obtaining the Peace promised. Asthe Sacrifice was ordain'd to make aronement for the Soul, so the Feast upon the Sacrifice was intended for the Satisfaction of the Soul concerning the Atonement made, to remove that Amazement and Terror which arose from the Consciousness of Guilt: This Ordinance is a Feast appointed for that purpose. God doth here not only affure us of the Truth of his Promife to us, but give us an Opportunity of solemnizing our Engagements to him, and fealing to be his; which is appointed not to fatisfy him; he that knows all things knows if we love him; but to fatisfy our felves, that thus taking hold of the Hope fet before us, we may have strong Consolation. The Blood of Christ is in this Ordinance sprinkled upon the Conscience to pacify that, having been already sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat, to make atonement there, so making the Comers thereunto perfect, Heb. 9. 13, 14.

When our Lord Jesus appear'd to his Disciples after his Resurrection, the first Word he said to them was, Peace be unto you, Luk. 24.36. And he saith the same to us in this Ordinance; Peace be to this House, Peace to this Heart. But the Disciples of Christ, like those that are apt to be terrified and affighted, supposing that they see a Spirit, or Apparition, (ver. 37.) fearing that its all but a Delusion, its too good News to be true; what have they to do with Peace (think they) while their Corruptions, Follies, and Instrmities are so many? But Christ by this Sacrament checks those Fears; as there, ver. 38.39. Why are ye troubled? and why do Thoughts arise

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arise in your Hearts? Behold my Hands and my Feet. There's that in the Marks of the Nails which is fufficient to stop the Mouth of Unbelief, and to heal the Wounds of a broken and contrite Spirit: There is merit enough in Christ, tho' in us there is nothing but meanness and unworthiness. Such Considerations the Ordinance offers as have oft been found effectual by the Grace of God to create the Fruit of the Lips, Peace, and to restore Comfort to the Mourners, Ifa, 57. 17, 18. Init Christ faith again, Peace be unto you, as he did, John 20. 21: and sometimes. a mighty Power hath gone along with that Word to lay a Storm, as did with that (Mark 4. 39.) Peace be still, so that the Soul so calm'd, so quieted, hath gone away, and faid with wonder, What manner of Man is this, for even the Winds and the Seas obey him.

Fourthly, Here we may receive Supplies of Grace. Jesus Christ is in this Ordinance made of God to all Believers, not only Righteousness but Santtification; fo we must receive him, and having received him so, we must malk in him. Tis certain we have as much need of the Influences of the Spirit to furnish us for our Duties, as we have of the Merit of Christ to atone for our Sins; and as much need of Divine Grace to carry on the Good Work as to begin it. We are in our felves not only ungodly, but without Strength, impotent in that which is good, and inclin'd to that which is evil, Rom. 5. 6. and in the Lord alone have we both Righteousness and Strength, Isa. 45. 24. If therefore we have it in him, hither we must come to have it from him, for Gospel Ordinances (and this particularly) are Means of Grace, and the ordinary Vehicle in which Grace is convey'd to the Souls of Believers. Tho' God is not ty'd to them, we are, and must attend them with an Expectation to receive Grace from God

God by them, and an intire Submission of Soul to the Operation and Conduct of that Grace. This Ordinance is as the Pool of Bethesda, which our weak and impotent Souls must by down by, waiting for the moving of the Waters, as those that know there is a healing Virtue in them, which we may experience Benefit by, as well as others. Here therefore we must set our selves, expecting and desiring the effectual working of God's Grace in us, attending at Wisdom's Gates for Wisdom's Gifts, and endeavouring to improve the Ordinance to this End.

From the Fulness that is in Jesus Christ, in whom it pleased the Father that all Fulness should dwell, we are here waiting to receive Grace for Grace, John 1. 16. that is, abundance of Grace, and of the Gift of Righteousness, Rom. 5. 17. Where there is true Grace, there is need of more, for the best are fanctified but in part, and there is a Defire of more, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, pressing towards Perfection; and there is a Promise of more, for to him that hath shall be given; and he that bath clean Hands shall be stronger and stronger. Therefore in a Sense of our own Necessities, and a Dependance upon God's Promises, we must by Faith receive and apply to our selves the Grace offer'd us. What things soever we desire, according to the Will of God, if we believe that we receive them, our Saviour hath told us, we shall have them, Mar. 11. 24. According to thy Faith be it unto thee.

Reach forth a Hand of Faith therefore, and receive the promised Grace, both for the confirming of gracious Habits, and for the quickning of gra-

cious Acts.

I. Let us here receive Grace for the confirming of gracious Habits, that they may be more deeply rooted.

We are conscious to our selves of great Weakness in

in Grace; tis like a Grain of Mustard-Seed, as a bruised Reed, and smoking Flax; we are weak in our Knowledge, and apt to mistake; weak in our Affections, and apr to cool; weak in our Resolutions, and apt to waver; How weak is my Heart! But here's Bread that strengthens Man's Heart, fignifying that Grace of God, which confirms the Principles. and invigorates the Powers of the Spiritual and Divine Life in the Souls of the Faithful. Come, my Soul, come eat of this Bread, and it shall strengthen thee; tho' perhaps thou may'ft not be immediately sensible of this Strength received, the Improvement of Habits is not suddenly discern'd; yet thro' this Grace thou shalt find hereafter, that thy Path hath been like the shining Light, which shineth more and more.

We find there is much lacking in our Faith, in our Love, in every Grace; here therefore we must defire and hope, and prepare to receive from Christ fuch Gifts of the Holy Ghost as will be mighty thro' God to increase our Faith; that its Discoveries of Divine Things may be more clear and distinct; and its Assurances of the Truth of them more certain and confident; that it's Consent to the Covenant may be more free and resolv'd, and its Complacency in the Covenant more fweet and delightful. And that which thus increaseth our Faith will be effectual to enflame our Love, and make that strong as Death in its Desires towards God, and Resolutions for him. We must here wait to be strengthned with all might, by his Spirit in the inner Man, unto all Patience in suffering for him, and diligence in doing for him, and both with joyfulness, Col. 1.11. We here put our felves under the happy influence of that exceeding great and glorious Power, which worketh mightily in them that believe, Eph. 1.19.

2. Let us here receive Grace for the quickning of gracious Als, that they may be more strongly exerted:

We come to this Throne of Grace, this Mercy Seat, this Table of our God, that here we may not only obtain Mercy to pardon, but may find Grace to help in every time of need, Heb. 4. 16. Grace to excite us to direct us in, and throughly furnish us for every good word and work, according as the Duty of every day requires. 'Twas a very encouraging Word which Christ said to Paul, when he pray'd for the removal of that Messenger of Satan, which was sent to buffet bim, 2 Cer. 12. 9. My Grace is sufficient for thee, and all true Believers may take the Comfort of it; what was faid to him is faid to all, whatever the Exigence of the Case is; they that commit themselves to the Grace of God with a fincere Refolution in every thing to fubmit to the Conduct and Government of that Grace, shall be enabled to do all things thro' Christ strengthning them.

Let a lively Faith here descend to Particulars, and receive this Grace with Application to the various Occurrences of the Christian Life. When I go about any Duty of Solemn Worship, I find I am not sufficient of my self for it, not so much as to think one good thought of my self, much less such a Chain of good thought as is necessary to an acceptable Prayer, to the profitable Reading and Hearing of the Word, and the right Sanctification of a Lord's Day; but all our Sufficiency for these Services is of God, and of his Grace. That Grace I here receive, according to the Promise, and will always go forth, and go on in the strength of it.

When an Opportunity offers it self of doing good to others, to their Bodies by relieving their Necessities, or contributing any way to their comfort and support; or to their Souls by seasonable Advice, Instruction, Reproof, or other good Discourse, we must depend on this Grace for Ability to do it prudently, faithfully, and successfully, and so as to be accepted of God in it. I find I want Wisdom

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for these and such like Services, and for the ordering of all my Affairs, and whither shall I go for it but to Wisdom's Feasts; whose Preparations are not only good for Food and pleasant to the Eve. but greatly to be desired to make one wife. Here therefore I receive Christ Fesus the Lord, as made of God unto mo Wisdom, Wisdom dwelling with Prudence; Wisdom to understand my way, that Wisdom which in every doubtful case is profitable to direct. Having many a time pray'd Solomon's Prayer, for a wife and understanding Heart, I here receive the scaled Grant in answer to it; Wisdom and Knowledge are given thee, so much as shall be sufficient for thee in thy Place and Station, to guide thee in glorifying God, so as that thou mayest not come fhort of enjoying him.

When we are affaulted with Temptations to Sin. we find how weak and ineffectual our Resistance hath often been; here therefore we receive Grace to fortify us against all those Assaults, that we may not be foil'd and overcome by them. All that in this Sacrament lift themselves under the Banner of the Captain of our Salvation, and engage themselves as his Faithful Souldiers in a Holy War against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, may here be furnish'd with the whole Armour of God, and that Power of his might, as it is call'd, Eph. 6. 10. wherewith they shall be able to stand and withstand in the Evil Day, Eph. 6. 10, &c. I now receive from God and his Grace, strength against such a Sin that hath oft prevail'd over me, fuch Temptation that hath oft been too hard for me, now therefore O God strengthen my Hands. Thro' God I shall

When we are burthen'd with Affliction, we find it hard to bear up; we faint in the Day of Adversion, which is a fign our strength is small; we grieve too much, and are full of Fears in a Day of Trou-

do valiantly.

ble, our Hearts many a time ready to fail us; hither therefore we come to receive Grace sufficient for our Support under the Calamities of this prefent time, that whatever we lose we may not lose our Comfort, and whatever we fuffer we may not fink: Grace to enable us whatever happens, to keep possession of our own Souls, by keeping up our Hope and Joy in God; that when Flesh and Heart fail, we may find God the Strength of our Heart, and if he be so, as the Day is so shall the Strength be, Deut. 33. 25. Such Affurances are here given to all Believers of God's Prefence with them in all their Afflictions, and of the Concurrence of all for their good, that being thus encourag'd, they have all the reason in the World to say, Welcome the Will

of God; nothing can come amis.

We know not how we may be call'd out to bear our Testimony to the Truths and Ways of God in Sufferings for Righteoulnels sake; we are bid to count upon them, and to prepare for them. must in this Ordinance faithfully promise that, however we may be tried; we will never forfake Christ, nor turn from following after him: Tho' we should dy with him, yet will we not deny him. But we have no reason to confide in any Strength of our own, for the making good of this Promise; nor can we pretend to such a Degree of Resolution, Steddiness, and Presence of Mind, as will enable us to encounter the Difficulties we may meet with; Peter when he shamed himself, warned us to take beed lest we fall, when we think we stand : Here therefore we must receive strength for such Trials, that we may overcome them by the Blood of the Lamb, and by not loving our Lives unto the Death, and that the Prospect of none of these things may move us.

Lastly, How near our great Change may be we cannot tell, perhaps nearer than we imagine; we are not fure that we shall live to fee another Opportunity of this kind; but this we are fure of, that it is a ferious thing to dy, tis a Work we never did, and when we come to do it, we shall need a Strength we never had. In this Sacrament therefore, from the Death of Christ, we must fetch in Grace to prepare us for Death, and to carry us fafely and comfortably thro' that dark and difmal Vally. I depend not only upon the Providence of God to order the Circumstances of my Removal hence for the best to me, but upon the Grace of God to take out the Sting of Death, and then to reconcile me to the Stroke of Death, and to enable me to meet Death's Harbingers, and bear its Agonies not only with the Constancy and Patience that becomes a wife Man, but with the Hope and Joy that becomes a good Christian.

Fifthly, Here we may receive the Earnests of Eternal Bliss and Joy. Heaven is the Crown and Centre of all the Promises, and the Perfection of all the Good contain'd in them; all the Bleffings of the New Covenant have a tendency to this, and are in order to it. Are we predestinated? 'tis to the Inheritance of Sons: Call'd? it is to his Kingdom and Glory: Sanctified? tis that we may be made meet for the Inheritance, and wrought to the self-same thing. This therefore we should have in our Eye, in our Covenant and Communion with God; that Eternal Life which God that cannot ly promiseth. We must receive the Spirits in his Graces and Comforts, as the Earnest of our Inberitance, Eph. 1. 14. 2 Cor. 1. 22. --- 5. 5. They that deal with God must deal upon trust, for a Happiness in Reversion, a Recompence of Reward to come; must forsake a World in sight and present, for a World out of fight and future. All Believers confent to this; they lay up their Treasure in Heaven, and hope for what they see not. This they depend upon, and in prospect of it, they are willing to labour, and suffer, to deny themselves and take up their Cross, knowing that Heaven will make amends for all; tho' they may be Losers for Christ, they shall not be Losers by him in the End; this is the Bargain: In the Lord's Supper Christ gives us Earnest upon this Bargain, and what we receive there, we receive as Earnest. An Earnest not only confirms the Bargain, and secures the Performance of it, but is it self part of Payment, tho' but a small part in comparison with the full Sum.

We here receive the Earnest of our Inheritance, that is,

1. We receive the Assurances of it; the Royal Grant of it is here feal'd and deliver'd by the King of Kings; Teste me ipso. God here faith to me as he did to Abram, Gen. 13. 14. Life up thine Eyes now, and look from the place where thou art. Take a view of the Heavenly Candan, that Land which eternally flows with better things than Milk and Honey, Immanuel's Land; open an Eye of Faith, and behold the Pleasures and Glories of that World, as they are describ'd in Scripture, such as Eye hath not feen, nor Ear heard; and know of a furety that all the Land which thou feeft, and that which is infinitely more and better than thou can'ft conceive, to thee will I give it, to thee for ever. Fear not little Flock, fear not ye little ones of the Flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. Follow Christ and serve him, and you shall be for ever with him; Continue with him now in his Temptations, and you shall shortly share with him in his Glories. Only be faithful unto Death, and the Crown of Life is as sure to you as if it were already

Seisin upon the Deed: Take this and eat it, take this and drink it in token of this, I will be to thee a Ged; that is, a perfect and everlasting Happiness; such as shall answer the vast extent and compass of

that great Word, (Heb. 11. 16.)

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Come now, my Soul, and accept the Security offer'd; the Inheritance secur'd is unspeakably rich and invaluable; the Losses and Sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compai'd with it; the Title is good, 'tis a purchased Possession, he that grants it hath Power over all Flesh, that he thould give Eternal Life, John 17.2. The Affurances are unquestionably valid, not only the Word and Oath, but the Writing and Seal of the Eternal God, in the Scriptures and Sacraments: Here's that (my Soul) which thou may'st venture thy felf upon, and venture thine all for; do it then, do it with a Holy Boldness. Lay hold on Eternal, lay fast hold on it, and keep thy hold. Look up (my Soul) look as high as Heaven, the highest Heavens; look forward (my Soul) look as far forward as Eternity, and let Eternal Life, Eternal Joy, Eternal Glory be thine Aim in thy Religion, and refolve to take up with nothing short of these. God hath been willing more abundantly to shew to the Heirs of Promise the immutability of his Counsel, and therefore hath thus confirm'd it, so as to leave no room for doubting, that by all these immutable things in which it is imp fible for God to lie, we might have strong Consolation who have fled for refuge; to lay hold on the hope Set before us, Heb. 6.17, 18. Take him at his Word then, and build thy hope upon it. Be not faithles but believing; be not careless but industrious. Here's a Happinels worth striving for; run with patince the race that is fet before thee, with this Prize in thine E. e.

2. We receive the Foretasts of it. We have in this Ordinance not only a Ratification of the Promise

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of the Heavenly Canaan, but a Pattern or Specimen given us of the Fruits of that Land; like the Bunch of Grapes which were brought from the Vally of Escol to the Israelites in the Wilderness; a View given us of that Land of Promise, like that which Moses had of the Land of Canaan from the top of Pifgah; As the Law was a Type and Figure of the Melliah's Kingdom on Earth, so the Gospel is of his Kingdom in Heaven: Both are Shadows of good things to come, Heb. 10.1. like the Map of a rich and large Country in a Sheet of Paper. Our future Happiness is in this Sacrament not only feal'd to us, but shew'd to us, and we here tafte something of the Pleasures of that better Country. In this Ordinance we have a Sight of Christ, he is evidently set forth before us, and what's Heaven but to fee him as he is, and to be for ever beholding his Glory? We are here receiving the Pledges and Tokens of Christ's Love to us, and returning the Protestations and Expressions of our Love to him; and what is Heaven but an eternal interchanging of Love between a Holy God and Holy Souls? We are here praising and bleffing the Redeemer, celebrating his Honour, and giving him the Glory of his Atchievements, and what's that but the Work of Heaven? 'tis what the Inhabitants of that World are doing now, and what we hope to be doing with them to Eternity. We are here in spiritual Communion with all the Saints, coming in Faith, Hope, and Love to the general Affembly and Church of the First-born, and what's Heaven but that in Perfection? In a Word, Heaven is a Feast, and so is this; only this is a running Banquet, that's an Everlasting Feast.

Come (my Soul) and see a Door here open'd in Heaven; look in at that Door now, by which thou how eft to enter shortly. Let this Ordinance do something of the Work of Heaven upon thee, God having provided in it something of the Pleasures of

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Heaven for thee. Heaven will for ever part between thee and Sin; let this Ordinance therefore set thee at a greater distance from it. Heaven will fill thee with the Love of God; in this Ordinance therefore let that Love be shed abroad in thine Heart. In Heaven thou shalt enter into the Joy of thy Lord; let that Joy now enter into thee, and be thy Strength and thy Song. Heaven will be perfect Holines; let this Ordinance make thee more holy, and more conformable to the Image of the Holy Jesus: Heaven will be Everlasting Rest. Here therefore, return to God as thy Rest, O my Soul, and repose thy self in him. Let every Sacrament be to thee a Heaven upon Earth, and each of these Days of the Son of Man, as one of the Days of Heaven.

CHAP. X.

Helps for the Exciting of those Pious and Devout Affections which should be working in us while we attend this Ordinance.

Wondrous Sights are here to be seen where the Lord's Death is seed forth; precious Benefits are here to be had, where the Covenant of Grace is seal'd; the Transaction is very solemn, very serious, nothing more so on this side Death: But what Impressions must be made hereby upon our Souls? How must we stand affected while this is in doing? Is this Service only a Shew at which we may be unconcern'd Spectators? Or is it a Market-place in which we may stand all the Day Idle? No, by no means: Here's Work to be done, Heart-work, such as requires a very close Application of Mind, and a great Liveliness and Vigour of Spirit, and in K 2

which all that is within us should be employ'd, and all little enough. Here's that to be done which calls for fixed Thoughts and warm Affections, which needs them, and well deferves them. What Jenfible Movings of Affection we should aim at is not eafy to direct; Tempers vary. Some are foon mov'd, and much mov'd with every thing that affects them; from fuch it may be expected that their Passions which are strong at other times, should not be weak at this Ordinance; and yet no doubt there are others whose natural Temper is happily more calm and fedate, that are not conscious to themselves of such Stirrings of Affection as some experience at this Ordinance, and yet have as comfortable Communion with God, as good Evidence of the Truth and Growth of Grace, and as much Real Benefit by the Ordinance, as those that think themselves even transported by it. The deepest Rivers are scarce perceived to move, and make the least Noise. On the one Hand there may be much Heat where there is little Light, and ftrong Passions where there are very weak Resolutions; like the Waters of a Land-flood, which make a great them, but are shallow and soon gone; we must not therefore build a good Opinion of our Spiritual State upon the Vehemence of our Affection. A Romance may reprefent a Tragical Story fo pathetically, asto make a great Impression upon the Minds of some, who yet know the whole matter to be both feign'd and forreign: Bodily Exercise, if that be all, profits little. And on the other Hand there may be a true and strong Faith informing the Judgment, bowing the Will, commanding the Affections, and purifying the Heart and Life where yet there are not any Transports or Pathetical Expressions. may be true Joy where yet the Mouth is not fill'd with laughter, nor the Tongue with Singing; and true Sor-Fow where yet the Eyedoth not run down with Tears. They

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They whose Heatts are firmly fixed for God, may take the Comfort of that, tho' they do not find their Hearts sensibly flowing out towards him.

And yet in this Sacrament where it is design'd that the Eye should affect the Heart, we must not rest in the bare Contemplation of what is here fet before us. but the Consideration thereof must make an Impression upon our Spirits, which should be turn'd as Clay to this Seal. If what is here done do not affect us for the present, it will not be likely to influence us afterwards; for we retain the Remembrance of things better by our Affections than by our Notions: I shall never forget thy Precepts, when by them thou hast quickned me. Here therefore let us stir up the Gift that is in us, endeavouring to affect our felves with the great things of God and our Souls; and let us pray to God to affect us with them by his Spirit and Grace, and to testify his Acceptance of the Sacrifice of a Devoted Heart, which we are here to offer, by kindling it with this Holy Fire from Heaven. Awake O North Wind, and come thou South, and blow upon my Garden. Come thou bleffed Spirit, and move upon these Waters, these dead Waters, to fet them a moving in Rivers of living Water; come and breath upon these dry Bones, that they may live. O that I might now be in the Mount with God! that I might be so taken up with the things of the Spirit and the other World, that for the time I may even forgetthat I am yet in the Body, and in this World! O that I might now be foaring upwards, upwards towards God, prefling forwards, forwards towards Heaven, as one not floathful in this business, but fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord, for here its no time to trifle!

Let us then see in some Particulars how we should be affected when we are attending on the Lord in this Solemnity, and in what Channels these Waters of the Sanctuary should run, that we may take our

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Work

Work before us, and apply our Minds to the Confideration of those things that are proper to excite those Affections.

First, Here we must be forrowing for Sin, after a godly sort, and blushing before God at the Thought of it. Penitential Grief and Shame are not at all unsuitable to this Ordinance, tho it is intended for our Joy and Honour, but excellent Preparatives for the Benefit and Comfort of it. Here we should be like Ephraim, bemoaning our selves; like Job abhorring our selves, renewing those sorrowful Reslections we made upon our own Follies, when we were preparing for this Service, and keeping the Fountains of Repentance still open, still slowing. Our Sorrow for Sin needs not hinder our Joy in God, and therefore our Joy in God must not forbid our Sorrow for Sin.

1. Our near Approach to God in this Ordinance should excite and increase our Holy Shame and Sorrow. When we see what an Honour we are advanc'd to, what a Favour we are admitted to, 'tis seasonable to reslect upon our own unworthiness, by reason of the Guilt of Sin, and our own unstrness, by reason of the Power of Sin to draw near to God. A Man's Deformity and Desilement is never such a Mortification to him as when he comes into the Presence of those that are comely, clean, and sashionable: And when we are conscious to our selves that we have dealt basely and disingenuously with one, we were under the highest Obligations to Love and Honour, an Interview with the Person so offended cannot but renew our Grief.

I am here drawing nigh to God, not only treading his Courts with Christians at large, but sitting down at his Table with Select Disciples, bur when I consider how pure and holy he is, and how vile and sinful I am, I am asham'd, and blush to lift up

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my Face before him : To me belongs shame and confusion of Face; I have many a time heard of God by the hearing of the Ear, but now I am taken to fit down with him at his Table, mine Eye sees him, fees the King in his Beauty, wherefore I abbor my self, and repent in Dust and Ashes. What a Fool, what a Wretch have I been to offend a God who appears fo Holy in the Eyes of all that draw nigh unto him, and fo great to all them that are about him. Wo is me, for I am undone, lost and undone for ever, if there were not a Mediator between me and God. because I am a Man of Unclean Lips, and an unclean Heart: Now I perceive it, and my own Degeneracy and Danger by reason of it, for mine Eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts, Isa. 6. 5. I have reason to be asham'd, to see one I am so unlike to, and afraid to see one I am so obnoxious to. The higher we are advanced by the Free Grace of God, the more reason we shall see to abase our felves and cry, God be merciful to us Sinners.

2. A Sight of Christ crucified, should increase and excite our Penitential Shame and Sorrow; and that Evangelical Repentance, in which there is an Eye to the Cross of Christ. 'Tis prophesied, nay, 'tis promis'd as a Bleffed Effect of the pouring out of the Spirit in Gospel times upon the House of David and the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, that they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and Shall mourn, Zech. Here we see Christ pierced for our Sins, nay, pierced by our Sins; our Sins were the Cause of his Death, and the Grief of his Heart. The Fews and Romans crucified Christ, but as David kill'd Vriah with his Letter, and Ahab kill'd Naboth with his Seal, so the Hand-writing that was against us for our Sins, nail'd Christ to the Cross, and so he nail'd it to the Cross. We had eaten the sower Grapes, and his Teeth were set on edg. Can we see him thus suffering for us, and shall not we suffer K 4

with him? was he in such Pain for our Sins, and thall not we be in pain for them? was his Soul exceeding forrersful even unto Death, and shall not ours be exceeding forrowful, when that's the may to Life? Come, my Soul, fee by Faith the Holy Jesis made Sin for thee; the Glory of Heaven made a Reproach of Men for thee; his Father's Joy made a Man of Sorrows for thy Transgressions. See thy Sins burthening him when he fweat, spitting upon him and buffeting him, and putting him to open Shame, crowning him with Thorns, and piercing his Hands and his Side; and let this melt and break this hard and rocky Heart of mine, and diffolve it into Tears of Godly Sorrow. Look on Christ dying, and weep not for him (tho' they who have any thing of Ingenuity and Good Nature, will fee reason enough to weep for an innecent Sufferer) but weep for thy felf, and thine own Sins, for them be in bitterness as one that is in bitterness for an only Son.

Add to this, That our Sins have not only pierced him, as they were the Cause of his Death, but as they have been the Reproach of his Holy Name. and the Grief of his Holy Spirit. Thus we have crucified bim efrest, by doing that which he hath often declar'd to be a Vexation and Dishonour to him, as far as the Joys and Glories of His present State can admit. The Confideration of this should greatly humble us: Nothing goes nearer to the Quick with a true Penitent, nor touches him in a more tender part than this. Ezek. 6. 9. They shall remember me among the Nations whither they shall be carried Captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which bath departed from me; a strange Expression, that the great God should reckon himfelf, broken by the Sins of his People; no wonder it follows, they shall loath themselves for the Evils which they have committed. Can we look upon a humbled broken

broken Christ with an unhumbled, unbroken Heart? Do our Sins grieve him? and shall they not grieve us? Come, my Soul, and sit down by the Cross of Christ as a true Mourner; let it make the eweep to see him weep, and bleed to see him bleed. That Heart is frozen hard indeed, which

these Considerations will not thaw.

3. The gracious Offer here made us of Peace and Pardon, should excite and increase our Godly Sorrow and Shame. This is a Gospel Motive, Revent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at band, that is, the Promise of Pardon upon Repentance is publish'd and feal'd, and whoever will, may come and take the The Terrours of the Law are of use Benefit of it. to startle us, and put us into a Horrour for Sin, as those that are afraid of God; but the Graces of the Gospel contributes more to an ingenuous Repentance, and makes us more asham'd of our selves. This rents the Heart, to confider God so gracious and merciful, so flow to anger, and ready to forgive, Focl 2. 13. Let this loving Kindness melt thee, O my Soul, and make thee to relent more tenderly than ever. Wretch that I have been! to spit in the Face and spurn at the Bowels of such Mercy and Love by my wilful Sin! to despise the Riches of Gospel Grace! I am ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I do bear the Reproach of my Youth. Doth God meet me thus with Tenders of Reconciliation? Doth the Party offended make the first Motion of an Agreement? Shall sach an undutiful disobedient prodigal Son as I have been, be embrac'd and kissid, and cloath'd with the best Robe? This Kindness overcomes me; now it cuts me to the Heart, and humbles me to the Dust to think of my former Rebellions; they never appear'd so heinous, so vile as they do, now I fee them pardon'd. The more certain I am that I shall not be ruin'd by them, the more reason. I see to be humbled for them. When Gol K. S.

promifeth to establish his Covenant with repenting Israel, he adds, That thou may it remember and be confounded, and never open thy Mouth any more, because of thy shame when I am pacified towards thee, Ezek. 16.62, 63. To see God provok'd causeth a Holy Trembling, but to see him pacified causeth a Holy Blushing. The Day of Atonement when the Sins of Israel were to be sent into a Land of Forgetfulness, must be a Day to afflict the Seul, Lev. 16.29. The Blood of Christ will be the more healing and comforting to the Soul, for its bleeding afresh thus upon every remembrance of Sin.

Secondly, Here we must be confiding in Christ Fefus, and relying on him alone for Life and Salvation. When we mourn for Sin, bleffed be God we do not forrow as those that have no hope: True Penitents. are perplexed, but not in despair, cast down, but not destroyed: Faith in Christ turns even their Sorrows into Joys, gives them their Vineyards from thence, and even the Valley of Achor (of Trouble for Sin) for a Door of Hope, Hof. 2. 15. We have not only an All-sufficient Happiness to hope for, but an Allsufficient Saviour to hope in: Here therefore let us. exercise and encourage that Hope; let us trust in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and stay our selves upon him; come up out of this Wilderness, leaning upon our Beloved, Cant. 8. 5. Come my Soul, weary as thouart, and rest in Christ; cast thy Burthen upon him, and he shall sustain thee; commit thy way to him, and thy Thoughts shall certainly be established; commit thy felf to him, and it shall be well with thee; he will keep thro' his own Name that which thou committest to him. Commit thy felf to him as the Scholar commits himself to his Teacher to be in-Aructed, with a Resolution to take his Word for the Truth of what he teacheth: (oportet discentem credere) As the Patient commits himself to his Physician : cian to be cur'd, with a Resolution to take whatever he prescribes, and punctually to observe his Orders: As the Client commits himself to his Counsel, to draw his Plea, and to bring him off when he is judged, with a Resolution to do all such things as he shall advise: As the Traveller commits himself to his Guide to be directed in his way with a Resolution to sollow his Conduct: As the Orphan commits himself to his Guardian to be govern'd and dispos'd of at his Discretion, with a Resolution to comply with him. Thus must we commit our selves to Christ.

1. We must confide in his Power, trusting in him as one that can help and fave us. (1.) He hath an uncontestible Authority, is a Saviour by Office, sanctified and feal'd and fent into the World for this Purpose; Help is laid upon him; we may well offer to trust him with our part of this great Concern, which is the fecuring of our Happiness, for God trusted him with his part of it, the securing of his Honour, and declar'd himself well-pleas'd in him, Mat. 3. 17. (2.) He hath likewise an unquestionable Ability to fave to the uttermost; he is mighty to fave, and every way qualified for the Undertaking; he is skilful. for Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge are hid in him; he is folvant, for there is in him an inexhaustible Fulness of Merit and Grace, sufficient to bear all our Burthens, and to supply all our Needs. We must commit our selves and the great Affairs of our Salvation unto him, with a full Affurance, that he is able to keep what we commit to him against that Day, that Day, that Great Day, which will try the Foundation of every Man's Work, 2 Tim. 1. 12.

2. We must conside in his Promise, trusting in him as one that will certainly help and save us on the Terms proposed; we may take his Word for it, and this is the Word which he hath spoken, Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out, John 6.37.

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He is engag'd for us in the Covenant of Redemption, and enagag'd to us in the Covenant of Grace, and in both he is the Amen, the Faithful Witness. On this therefore we must rely, the Word on which he hath caused us to hope; God hath spoken in his Holiness, that he will accept us in the Beloved, and in that I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine, Psal. 60. 6, 7. Pardon is mine, and Peace mine, and Christ mine, and Heaven mine, for Faithful is he that hath promised,

who also will do it.

Come then, my Soul, come thou and all thy Concerns into this Ark; and there thou shalt be safe when the Deluge comes: Flee, flee to this City of Refuge, and in it thou shalt be secur'd from the Avenger of Blood. Quit all other Shelters, for every thing but Christ is a Refuge of Lies, which the Hail will sweep away: There is not Salvation in any other but in him; trust him for it therefore, and depend upon him only. Reach bither thy Finger, and in this Ordinance behold his Hands; reach hither thy Hand and thrust it into his Side, and fay as Thomas did. My Lord, and my God. Here I cast Anchor, here I rest my Soul it is Christ that died, yea, rather is rifen again, and is and will be the Author of Eternal Salvation to all them that obey him: To him I intirely give up my felf, to be rul'd, and taught, and fav'd by him. and in him I have a full Satisfaction. I will draw near to God for Mercy and Grace in a dependance upon him as my Righteousness; I will go forthand goon in the way of my Duty, in a Dependance upon him as my Strength; I will hortly veture into the invisible unchangeable World, in a Dependance upon him as the Captain of my Salvation, how is able to bring many Sons to Glory, and as willing as he is able. Lord I believ: help thou mine unbelief.

Having thus committed thy felf (my Soul) to the Lord Jesus, comfort thy felf in him. Please thy felf

felf with the Thoughts of having dispos'd of thy felf so well, and of having lodg'd the great Concern of thy Salvation in so good a Hand; now return to thy rest, O my Soul, and be easy. Every good Christian may by Faith triumph as the Prophet doth, pointing at Christ, Ifa. 50. 7, 8. The Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I fet my Face like a Flint in a Holy Defiance of Satan, and all the Powers of Darkness, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me. who will contend with me? Take the Bible, turn to the 8th of the Romans, and read from ver. 21. to the End of the Chapter. If ever Bleffed Paul rode in a triumphant Chariot on this fide Heaven, 'twas when he wrote these Lines, What Shall we then fay to these things? &c. Apply those Comforts to thy felf: O my Soul, thou hast said of the Lord, he is my Lord; rejoice in him then, and be exceeding glad. Thy Redeemer is mighty, and he rides upon the Heavens for thy help, and in his Excellency on the Sky: Deut. 33. 26. Do thou then ride upon the high Places of the Earth, and fuck Honey out of this Rock, and Oyl out of this Flinty Rock, Deut. 32. 13. Ifa. 58. 14. Having made fure thine Interest in Christ, live in a continual Dependance upon him; and being fatisfied of his Love, be satisfied with it: Thou hast enough and need'st no more.

Thirdy, Here we must be Delighting in God, and folacing our selves in his Favour. If we had not a Christ to hope in, being guilty and corrupt, we could not have a God to rejoice in; but having an Advocate with the Father, so good a Plea as Christ dying, and so good a Pleader as Christ interceding we may not only come beldly to the Throne of Grace, but may sit down under the Shadow of it with Delight, and behold the Beauty of the Lord. That God who is Love, and the God of Love here sheweth us his marvelleus leving kindness; causeth his Goodness to pass

Here he gives us his Loves, and thereby invites us to give him ours. 'Tis a Love-Feaft, the Love of Christ is here commemorated, the Love of God is here offer'd, and the Frame of our Spirits is disagreeable, and a Jar in the Harmony, if our Hearts be not here going out in Love to God, the chief Good, and our Felicity. They that came hither with Holy Desires, must refresh themselves here with Holy Desights. If we must rejoice in the Lord always, much more now, for a Feast was made for laughter, and so was this, for Spiritual for: If ever Wisdom's Ways be Ways of Pleasantness, surely they must be so when we come to eat of her Bread, and to drink of the Wine which she bath mingled.

Put thy felf then (my Soul) into a pleasant Frame; let the Joy of thy Lord be thy Strength, and let this Ordinance put a new Song into thy Mouth. Come and

hear the Voice of Joy and Gladness.

1. Let it be a Pleasure to thee to think that there is a God, and that he is fuch a one as he hath reveal'd himself to be. The Being and Attributes of God are a Terrour to those that are unjustified, and unfanctified; nothing can be more so; they are willing to believe there is no God, or that he is altogether fuch a one as themselves, because they heartily wish there were none, or one that they could be at Peace with, and yet continue their League with Sin: But to those who thro' Grace partake of a Divine Nature themselves, nothing is more agreeable, nothing more acceptable than the Thoughts of God's Nature and infinite Perfections. Delight thy felf therefore in thinking, that there is an Infinite and Eternal Spirit, who is felf-existent, and self-sufficient, the Best of Beings, and the First of Causes, the Highest of Powers, and the Richest and Kindest of Friends and Benefactors; the Fountain of Being, and Fountain of Bliss; the Father of Lights, and . and Father of Mercies. Love to think of him whom thou can'ft not see, and yet can'ft not but know; who is not far from thee, and yet between thee and Him there is an infinite awful Distance. Let these Thoughts be thy Nourishment and Refreshment.

2. Let it be a Pleasure to thee to think of the Obligations thou lieft under to this God as thy Creator, He that is the Former of my Body, and the Father of my Spirit, in whom I live, and move, and have my Being, is upon that account my rightful Owner, whose I am, and my Soveraign Ruler, whom I am bound to serve. Because he made me, and not I my felf, therefore I am not mine own but his, Pfal. 100. 3. Please thy self (my Soul) with this Thought, that thou art not thine own, but his that made thee; not left to thine own Will, but bound up to his; not made for thy felf, but defign'd to be to him for a Name and a Praise. Noble Powers are then intended for a Noble Purpose -- Delight thy felf in him as the Felicity and End of thy Being. who is the Fountain and Cause of it. Were I to chuse. I would not be mine own Master, mine own Carver, mine own Centre: No, I would not, 'tis better as it is; I love to think of the Eternal God as the just Director of all my Actions, to whom I am accountable, and the wife Disposer of all my Affairs, to whom I must submit. I love to think of him as my chief Good, who having made me, is alone able to make me happy; and as my Highest End, of whom, and thro' whom, and to whom are all things, Rom. 11.36.

3. Let it be a Pleasure to thee to think of the Covenant-Relations wherein this God stands to thee in Jesus Christ. This is especially to be our Delight in this sealing Ordinance; tho' the Sacrament directs us immediately to Christ, yet thro' him it leads us to the Father: He died the Fust for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God: To God therefore we

must go as our End and Rest, by Christ as our Way; to God as a Father, by Christ as Mediator. Come then, my Soul, and fee with Joy and the highest Satisfaction, the God that made thee entring into Covenant with thee, and engaing to make thee happy. Hear him faying to thee, my Soul, I am thy Salvation; thy Shield, and not only thy bountiful Rewarder, but thine exceeding great Reward; I am and will be to thee a God All-sufficient; a God that is enough. Fear thou not, for I am with thee, wherever thou art; be not dismayd, for I am thy God, whatever thou wantest, whatever thou loseft, call me God, even thine own God: when thou art weak I will strengthen thee, yea, when thou art helpless, I will help thee, yea, when thou art ready to fink, I will uphold thee with the right-hand of my Rightcousness, Isa. 41. 10. The God that cannot ly hath faid it, and herefeals it to thee, I will never leave thee nor for sake thee. Let this be to thee my Soul, the Voice of Joy and Gladness, making even broken Bones to rejoice. Encourage thy self in the Lord thy God. He is thy Shepherd, thou shalt not went any thing that is good for thee, Pfal. 23. 1. &c. Thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Hefts is bis Name, Ifa. 54. 5. and as the Bridegroom rejoiceth over the Bride, so Shall thy God rejoice over thee, Ifa. 62.35. He shall rest in his Love to thee, Zeph. 3. 17. Rest then in thy Love to him, and rejoice in him always. The Lord is thy Law-giver, thy King that will fave thee, Ifa. 33. 22. Swear Allegiance to him then with Gladness, and loud Hosannas; Let Ifrael rejoice in him that made him, that new made him; Let the Children of Zion be joyful in their King, Pfal. 149. 2. What would'st thou more: This God is thy God for ever and ever.

Stir up thy self (My Soul) to take the Comfort which is here offer'd thee. Let this strengthen the weak Hands, let it confirm the feeble Knees: If

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God be indeed the Health of thy Countenance, and thy God, why art thou cast down? why art thou difquieted? Dy not for thirst when there is such a Fountain of Living-Waters near thee, but draw Water with Joy out of these Wells of Salvation. Shiver not for cold when there is fuch a reviving quickning Heat in these Promises, but say with Pleasure, Aba, I am warm, I have seen the Fire, Isa. 44. 16. Faint not for hunger now thou art at a Feast of fat things, but be abundantly satisfied with the Goodness of God's House, Psal. 36.8: -- 65.4. The God whose Wrath and Frowns thou hast incurr'd, here favours thee, and smiles on thee, let this therefore give thee a Joy, greater than the Joy of Harvest, and far surpassing what they have that divide the Spoil. Tho'thou can'ft not reach to Holy Raptures, yet compose thy self to a Holy Rest; Delight thy self always in the Lord, especially at this Ordinance, and by thus taking the comfort of what thou hast received, thou qualifiest thy self to receive more, for then he Shall give thee the Defire of thy Heart, Pfal. 37.4. The way to have thine Heart's Defire is to make God thy Heart's Delight. umphin his Love, and thine Interest in him: His Benignity is better than Life, let it be to thee sweeter than Life it self. Beheld, God is my Saviour, God is my Salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovahis my Strength, and therefore my Song; the strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever, Isa. 12. 2. Pfal. 73. 26. When thou comest to the Altar of God, call him, God thy exceeding Joy, Pfal. 43. 4. Thy God, thy Glory, Ifa. 60. 19.

Fourthly, Here we must be admiring the Mysteries and Miracles of Redeeming Love. They that worshipped the Beast are said to wonder after him, Rev. 13. 3. so must they that worship the Lamb, for he hath done marvellous things. We have reason to say, that

that we were fearfully and wonderfully made, but without doubt we were more fearful and wonderfully redeem'd. We were made with a Word, but we were bought with a Price; stand still then and see the Salvation of the Lord, see it with Admiration. Affect thy self (my Soul) with a pleasing Wonder, while thou art seeing this great Sight. The Everlasting Gospel is here magnified and made honourable, let it be so in thine Eyes; call it the Glorious Gospel of the Blessed God. Let us take a view of some of the Marvellous Things which are done in the Work of our Redemption.

Twould have for ever puzzled the Wisdom of Angels and Men to have found out such a Method of Salvation as might effectually satisfy God's Justice, and yet secure Man's Happiness; save the Life of the Law-Breaker, and yet maintain the Honour of the Law-Maker. This is that Mystery which the Angels desire to look into, and which the most piercing Eye of those inquisitive Spirits that see by the Light of the Upper-World, will not be able to Eternity, to discern the bottom of. O the depth of this hidden Wisdom!

2. The Purposes of God's Love concerning it, from Eternity, are marvellous. Be assonished, O my Soul, at this, That the God who was infinitely happy in the Contemplation and Enjoyment of himself and his own Persections, should yet think Thoughts of Love towards a Remnant of Mankind, and towards thee among the rest, and design such Favours for them, such Favours for thee, before the Worlds

for how great is the Sum of them! Pfal. 139. 17.

3. The Choice of the Person who should undertake it is marvellous; the Son of his Love, that in parting with him for us he might commend his Love:

The Eternal Wisdom, the Eternal Word, that he might

might effectually accomplish this great Design, and might not fail nor be discourag'd. A Person every way fit both to do the Redeemer's Work, and to wear the Redeemer's Crown. 'Tis spoken of as an admirable Invention, Job 33. 24. I have found a Ransome: and Psal. 89. 19, 20. I have found David my Servant. On Earth there was not his like, nor in Heaven neither.

4. The Redeeme's Consent to the Undertaking is marvellous. Considering his own Dignity and Self-sufficiency, our Unworthiness and Obnoxiousness, the Dissidualty of the Service, and the ill Requitals he foresaw from an ungrateful World, we have reason to admire that he should be so free, so forward to it, and should say, Lo I come: Here am I, send me. Never was there such a Miracle of Love

and Pity; verily, it passeth Knowledge.

5. The Carrying on of his Undertaking in his Humiliation is marvellous. His Name was wonderful. Ifa. 9. 6. His Appearance in the World from first to last, was a continued Series of Wonders; without Controversy, great was this Mystery of Godliness. The Bringing of the first Begotten into the World, was attended with the Adorations of wondring Angels, Heb. 1. 6. His Doctrin and Miracles while he was in the World, were admirable; they that heard the one and saw the other, were beyond meafure astonished. But his going out of the World was the greatest wonder of all; it made the Earth to shake, the Rocks to rend, and the Sun to cover his Face. Never was there fuch a Martyr, never fuch a Sacrifice, never fuch a Paradox of Love as that was. God forbid that we should glory, save in the Cross of Christ; which is so much the Wisdom of God and the Power of God.

6. The Honours of his exalted State are marvellous. He that was for a little while lower than the Angel, a Worm and no Man, is now the Lord of Angels.

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One in our Nature is advanc'd to the highest Honours, invested with the highest Powers; having an uncontestable Authority to execute Judgment, even for this Reason, because he is the Son of Man, John. 5. 27. not only the he is so, but because he is so. This is the Lord's doing and it is, and

should be marvellous in our Eyes.

7. The Covenant of Grace made with us in him is marvellous. The Terms of the Covenant are wonderful reasonable and easy; the Treasures of the Covenant are wonderful rich and valuable. The Covenant it self is well order'd in all things, and sure; admirably well both for the Glory of God, and the Comfort of all Believers. God in it sheweth us his marvellous loving-kindness, Psal. 17.7. and we answer not the Design of the Discovery if we do not admire it. Other things, the more they are known, the less they are winder'd at; but the Riches of Redeeming Love appear more admirable to those that are best acquainted with them.

render to him that hath thus leved us. This wondrous Love is Love to us, and not only gives the greatest Encouragements to us to come to God for Mercy and Peace, but lays the strongest Engagements upon us to walk with God in Duty and Obedience. We are bound in Conscience, bound in Honour, bound in Gratitude to love him, and live to him, who loved us, and dy'd for us. This Concern should much affect us, and lie very near our Hearts, how we may answer the Intentions of this Love?

r. We should be affected with a jealous Fear lest we prove ungrateful, and like Hezekiah, render not again according to the Benefit done unto us, 2 Chron: 32.25. We cannot but know something by sad Expe-

Experience of the Treachery and Deceitfulness of our own Hearts, and how apt they are to flart aside like a broken Bow; and therefore we have no reason to presume upon our own Strength and Sufficiency: We are told of many who eat and drink in Christ's Presence, and yet are found at last unfaith. ful to him, and what if I should prove one of those? This Thought is not suggested here to amuze any that tremble at God's Word, or to weaken the Hands and fadden the Hearts of those that are truly willing, though very weak; but to awaken those that flumber, and humble those that are wife in their own conceit. Distrust thy felf, O my Soul, that thou may'ft trust in Christ only; fear thine own strength, that thou may'ft hope in his. He that hath done these great things for thee, must be applied to, and depended on to work those great things in thee, which are requir'd of thee : Go forth therefore, and go on in his Strength. If the same that grants us these Favours give us not wherewithal to make suitable Returns for them, we shall perish for ever in our Ingratitude.

2. We should be fill'd with Serious Defires to know and do our Duty, in return for that great Love wherewith we are loved. The Affections of a Grateful Mind are very proper to be working in us at this Ordinance. Doth not even Nature teach us to be grateful to our Friends and Benefastors? Let us be so to Christ then, the best of Friends, and kindest of Benefactors. Come, my Soul, here I see how much I am indebted, and how I owe my Life, and Joy, and Hope, and all to the Bleffed Jesus, and is it not time to ask, with Holy David, Pfal. 116. 12. What Shall I render unto the Lord for all his Benefits towards me? Shall I not take the Cup of Salvation, as he doth there, ver. 13. with this thought? What shall I render? Let David's Answers to that Question which we find in that Psalm, be mine.

(1.) I love the Lord, ver. 1. Love is the Loadstone of Love; even the Publicans love those that love them; Lord, theu hast loved me with an Everlasting Love, from Everlasting in the Counsels of it. to Everlasting in the Consequences of it, and shall not my Heart with this Loving Kindness be drawn to thee? Jer. 31. 3. Lord I love thee; the World and the Flesh shall never have my Love more; I havelov'd them too much, I have lov'd them too long; the best Affections of my Soul shall now be confecrated to thee O God, to thee O Bleffed Whom have I in Heaven but thee? Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. 'Tis my Sorrow and Shame that I am fo weak and defective in my Love to thee: What a wretched Heart have I, that I can think, and speak, and hear, and see so much of thy Love to me, and be so little affected with it! So low in my Thoughts of thee, so cool in my Desires towards thee, so unsteddy in my Resolutions for thee! Lord pity me, Lord help me, for yet I love thee; I love to love thee: I earnestly defire to love thee better, and long to be there where Love shall be made perfect.

2. I will offer to thee the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, ver. 17. As Love is the Heart of Praise, so Praise is the Language of Love. What shall I render? I must render to all their Due: Tribute to whom Tribute is due: The Tribute of Praise to God, to whom it is due. We do not accommodate our selves to this Thanksgiving-Feast, if we do not attend it with Hearts enlarged in Thanksgiving; this Cup of Salvation must be a Cup of Blessing; in it we must bless God, because in it God blesseth us. Thanksul Acknowledgments of God's Favours to us are but poor Returns for rich Receivings, yet they are such as God will accept if they come from

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an upright Heart. Bless the Lord, therefore, O my Soul, and let all that is within me bless his Holy Name. Speak well of him who hath done well for thee. Thank him for all his Gifts both of Nature and Grace, especially for Jesus Christ the Spring of all. As long as I live I will bless the Lord, yea, I will praise my God while I have my Being, for he is the God of my Life, and the Author of my well-being, and when I have no Life, no Being on Earth, I hope to have a better Life, a better Being in a better World, and to be doing this Work for ever in a better manner.

3. O Lord, truly I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant, ver. 16. I acknowledge my felf already bound to be so, and further oblige my self by solemn Promise to approve my self so. What shall I render? Lord, I render my self to thee, my whole self, Body, Soul, and Spirit; not in complement, but in Truth and Sincerity, I own my self thy Servant; to obey thy Commands, to be at thy dispose, and to be serviceable to thine Honour, and Interest; 'twill be my Credit and Ease, my Safety and Happiness to be under thy Government: Make

me as one of thy hired Servants.

4. I will call upon the Name of the Lord, ver. 13. This is the immediate Answer to that Question, what shall I render? and it is a surprizing Answer; it is uncommon among Men to make Petitions for further Favours, our Returns for former Favours; yet such a Return as this, the God that delights to hear Prayers, will be well-pleased with. Is God my Father? I will apply my self to him as his Child, and call him, Abba, Father. Have I an Advocate with the Father? then I will come boldly to the Throne of Grace. Are there such exceeding great and precious Promises made me, and seal'd to me? then I'll never loose the Benefit of them for want of putting them in suit. As I will love

love God the better, so I will love Prayer the better as long as I live; and having given my self unto God, I will give my self unto Prayer (as David did, Psal. 109. 4.) till I come to the World of Ever-

lasting Praise.

God who hath pleasure in the Prosperity of his Servants, would have them easy to themselves, and that they can never be, but by reposing in him; this therefore we must render: Tis work that is its own Wages; honour God by resting in him, please him by being well-pleased in him. Having received so much from him, let us own that we have enough in him, and that we can go no whither but to him with any hopes of Satisfaction. Lord, whither shall we go? He hath the Words of Eternal Life.

6. I will walk before the Lord in the Land of the Living, ver. 9. A Holy Life, tho' it cannot profit God, yet it glorisieth him, and therefore 'tis insisted upon as a necessary Return for the Favours we have received from God. While I am here in this Land of the Living, I will walk by Faith, having mine Eyes over towards the Lord, to see him as he reveals himself; hoping that shortly in that Land which is truly the Land of the Living, above I shall walk by sight, having mine Eye ever upon the Lord, to see him as he is. God hath here seal'd to me to be to me a God All-sufficient; Here therefore I seal to him, according to the Tenot of the Covenant, that his Grace enabling me, I will walk before him, and will be upright, Gen. 17. I.

7. I will pay my Vows unto the Lord, ver. 14, 18. Those that receive the Blessings of the Covenant, must be willing not only to come, but always to abide under the Bonds of the Covenant. Here we must make Vows, and then go away and make 'em

good. More of this in the next Chapter.

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Directions concerning the Solemn Vows we are to make to God in this Ordinance.

A Religious Vow is a Bond upon the Soul; so it is describ'd, Num. 30. 2. where he that voweth a Vow unto the Lord, is said thereby to bind his Soul with a Bond. 'Tis a solemn Promise by which we voluntarily oblige our selves to God and Duty, as a Willing People in the Day of his Power, Pfal. 110. 3. The Cords of a Man, and Bonds of Love, wherewith God draws us and holds us to himself, call upon us by our own Act and Deed to bind our solves, and these Vows also are Cords of a Man, for they are highly reasonable, and Bands of Love, for to the renewed Soul, they are an easy Yoke, and a light Burthen.

From all the other Parts of our Work at the Lord's Table, we may infer that this is one part of it; we must there make solemn. Vows to God, that we will diligently and faithfully serve him.

I. We are here to renew our Repensance for Sin, and it becomes Penitents to make Vows. When we profess our selves forry for what we have done amiss, it is very natural and necessary to add, that we will not offend any more, as we have done: If I have done Iniquity, I will do no more, Job 34-31, 32. We mock God when we say, We repent that we have done foolishly, if we do not at the same time

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resolve that we will never return again to folly, Psal. 85. 8. Times of Affliction are proper times to make Vows, and what is Repentance but a Self-Affliction? Trouble for Sin was not the least of that Trouble which David was in when his Lips utter'd those Vows which he speaks so feelingly of, Psal. 66. 13, 14. Probably 'twas under this Penitential Affliction that he sware unto the Lord, and vow'd unto the mighty God of Jacob, that he would find a Place for the Ark, Psal. 132. 1, 2. Vows against Sin resulting from Sorrow, for Sin shall not be rejected as extorted by the Rack, but graciously accepted as the genuin Language of a broken Heart,

and Fruits meet for Repentance.

2. We are here to ask and receive Mercy from God, and it becomes Petitioners to make Vows. When Facob found himself in special need of God's gracious Presence, he vowed a Vow, and set up a Stone for a Memorial of it, Gen. 28. 20. and Hannah when she pray'd for a particular Mercy, vowed a Vow, that the Comfort she pray'd for should be consecrated to God. Great and Precious Things we are here waiting to receive from God, and therefore tho' we cannot offer any thing as a valuable Confideration for his Favours, yet it becomes us to promise such suitable Returns as we are capable of making. When God encourageth us to feek to him for Grace, we must engage our selves not to receive his Grace in vain, but to improve and employ for him what we have from him.

3. We are here to give God Thanks for his Favours to us; now it becomes us in our Thanks-givings to make Vows, and to offer to God not only the Calves of our Lips, but the Works of our Hands. Jonah's Mariners when they offer'd a Sacrifice of Praise to the Lord, for a Calm after a Storm, as an Appendix to that Sacrifice, made Vows, Jon. 1. 16. The most acceptable Vows are

those

those which take rise from Gratitude, and which are drawn from us by the Mercies of God. Here I see what great things God hath done for my Soul, and what greater things he designs for me, shall not therefore freely bind my self to that which he

hath by fuch endearing Ties bound me to.

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4. We are here to join our selves to the Lord in an Everlasting Covenant, and it is requisite that our general Covenant be explain'd and confirm'd by particular Vows. When we present our selves to God as a living Sacrifice, with these Cords we must bind that Sacrifice to the Horns of the Altar; and while we experience in our selves such a Bent to backslide, we shall find all the Arts of Obligation little enough to be us'd with our own Souls. As it is not enough to confess Sin in the Gross, saying, I have finned, but we must enter into the detail of our Transgressions, saying with David, I have done this Evil; fo it is not enough in our covenanting with God; that we engage our felves in the general to be his, but we must descend to particulars in our Covenants, as God doth in his Commands, that thereby we may the more effectually both bind our selves to Duty, and mind our selves of Duty. If the People must distinctly say Amen to every Curse pronounc'd on Mount Ebal, (Deut. 27.) much more to every Precept deliver'd on Mount Horeb. thurse would out their away

Come then (my Soul) thou hast now thy Hand upon the Book to be sworn: Thou art listing up thy Hand to the most High God, the Possesser of Heaven and Earth, think what thou art doing, and adjust the Particulars, that this may not become a rash Oath, inconsiderately taken. God is here consistenting his Promise to us by an Oath, to show the immutability of his Cou isels of Love to us, Heb. 6. 17, 18. Here thereso: we must consist our Pro-

and to observe and do all the Commandments of the Lord our God, Neh. 10. 29. Some of the Oriental Writers tell us, that the most solemn Oath which the Patriarch's before the Flood us'd, was by the Blood of Abel; and we are sure, that the Blood of Jesus is infinitely more Sacred, and speaks much greater, and much better things than that of Abel. Let us therefore testify our value for that Blood, and secure to our selves the Blessings purchased by it, by our sincere and faithful dealing with God in that Covenant, which this is the Blood of.

The Command of the Eternal God is, that we cease to do Evil, and learn to do well; that we put off the Old Man, and put on the New; and our Vows to God must accordingly be against all Sin, and to all Duty; and under each of these Heads we must

be particular, according as the Case is.

First, We must here by a Solemn Vow bind our selves out from all Sin; so as not only to break our League with it, but to enter into League against it. The putting away of the strange Wives in Ezra's time, was not the work of one Day or two, Ezr. 10. 13. but a work of time; and therefore Egra when he had the People under Convictions, and faw them weeping fore for their Sin, in marrying them, very prudently bound them by a folemn Covenant that they would put them away, ver. 3. If ever we conceive an Aversion to Sin, surely it is at the Table of the Lord, and therefore we should improve that Opportunity to invigorate our Resolutions against it, that the Remembrance of those Resolutions may quicken our Resistance of it, when the sensible Impressions we are under from it, are become less lively. Thus we must by a folemn Vow cast away from us all our Transgressions, saying with Ephraim, What have I to do any more with Idels, i. We Hof. 14. 8.

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I. We must solemnly Vow, That we will not indulge or allow our selves in any Sin. Tho' Sin may remain, it shall not reign; tho' those Canaanites be in the Land, yet we will not be Tributaries to them. However, it may usurp and oppress as a Tyrant, it shall never be own'd as a rightful Prince, nor have a peaceable and undisturb'd Dominion. I may be in some particular Instances thro' the surprize of Temptations, led into Captivity by it, but I am sully resolv'd in the Strength of Christ, that I will never join in affinity with it, will never espouse its Cause, never plead for it, nor strike in with its Interests.

Bind thy felf with this Bond, O my Soul, that though through the Remainders of Corruptions, thou can'ft not fay, Thou hast no Sin; yet through the Beginnings of Grace thou wilt be able to fay, Thou lovest none. That thou wilt give no Countenance or Connivance to any Sin, no, not to fecret Sins, which though they fhame thee not before Men, yet shame thee before God and thine own Conscience; no not to Heart Sins, those first-born of the corrupt Nature, the beginning of its Strength; vain Thoughts may intrude, and force a Lodging in me, but I'll never invite them, never but them welcome, nor court their stay : Corrupt Ctions may disturb me, but they shall never be the quiet and peaceable Possession of me? It whatever Wars against my Soul, by the Grace of God, I will war against it, hoping in due time to get the Dominion, and have its Yoke broken from off my Neck, when Judgment shall be brought forth unto Victory, and Grace perfected in Glory.

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2. We must solemnly Vow, That we will never rield to any gross Sin, such as Lying, Injustice, Uncleannels, Drunkennels, Profanation of God's Name, and such like, which are not the Spots of

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God's Children. Tho' all the High Places be not taken away, yet there shall be no Remains of Baa! or of Baal's Priests and Altars in my Soul. Howevermy own Heart may be spotted by Sins of Infirmity, and may need to be daily washed, yet by the Grace of God I will never spot my Profession, nor stain the Credit of that by open and scandalous Sin. I have no reason to be ashamed of the Gofrel, and therefore it shall be my constant Endeayour not to be in any thing a shame to the Gospel; 'tis an Honour to me, I'll never be a Dishonour to it; I'll never do any thing, by the Grace of God I will not, which may give just Occasion to the Enemies of the Lord to blaspheme that worthy Name by which I am called. So shall it appear that I am upright if I be innocent from these great Transgressions, and truly penitent for all my Transgressions, Psal. 19. 13.

3. We must solemnly Vow, That with a particular Care we will keep our selves from our own Iniquity. That Sin which in our penitent Reflections our own Consciences did most charge us with, and reproach us for, that Sin we must in a special manner renew our Resolutions against. Was it Pride? was it Passion? was it Distrust of God, or Love of the World? was it an Unclean Fancy, or an Idle Tongue? Whatever it was, let the Spiritual Force be muster'd, and drawn out against that. The Instructions which Samuel gave to Ifrael when they were lamenting after the Lord, are observable to this purpose, I Sam. 7.3. If ye do return to the Lord with all your Hearts, and would be accepted of him therein, then put away the strange Gods and Ashtaroth. Was not Ashtaroth one of the strange Gods, or Goddeffes ? Yes, But that is particularly instanc'd in because it had been a Beloved Idol, dearer than the west, that especially must be put away. Thus in our Covenanting with God we must engage against all Sin.

Sin, but in particular against that which by reason of the Temper of our Minds, the Constitution of our Bodies, or the Circumstances of our outward Affairs, doth most easily beset us, and we are most

prone to.

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Knowest thou thine own self, O my Soul? If thou dost, thou knowest thine own Sickness, and thine own Sore, that is, thine own Iniquity: Bring that hither and flay it, let not thine Eye spare, neither do thou pity it. Hide it not, excuse it not, indent not for leave to referve it, as Naaman did for his House of Rimmon; though it have been to thee as a Right-Eye, as a Right-hand, as thy Guide, and thine Acquaintance, it hath been a false Guide, an ill Acquaintance, pluck it out, cut it off, and cast it from thee. Now come, and fortify thy Refolutions in the Strength of Christ against that; double thy Guard against that; fetch in Help from Heaven against that; be vigorous in thy Resistance of that; and how many foever its Advantages are against thee, yet despair not of a Victory at laft.

4. We must solemnly Vow, That we will abstain from all Appearances of Evil; not only from that which is manifestly Sin; and which carries the Evidences of its own Malignity written in the Forehead, but from that which looks like Sin, and borders upon it. Wisdom is here profitable to direct, so as that we may not on the one Hand indulge a scrupulous Conscience, and yet on the other Hand may preserve a tender Conscience. Far be it from us to make that to be Sin which God hath not made fo: And yet in doubtful Cases it must be our Care and Covenant to keep the safer side; and to be cautious of that which looks suspicious: He that walks uprightly, walks furely. That which we have found to be either a Snare to us, and an Occasion of Sin, or a Blemish to us, and an Occasion of Scandal,

or a Terror to us in the Reflection, and an Occafion of Grief and Fear, it may do well expresly to resolve against, tho we be not very clear that it is in it self sinful, nor dare censure it as evil in others; provided that this Vow be made with such Limitations as that it may not afterwards prove an Entanglement to us, when either by the Improvement of our Knowledge, or the Change of our Circumstances, it ceaseth to have in it an Appearance of Evil:

And art thou willing (my Soul) to come under this Bond? Wilt thou put far from thee the accurfed thing? Wilt thou in this Ordinance make a Covenant with mine Eyes, and oblige them not to book on the Wine when it is red; not to look on a Woman to lust after her? Wilt thou shun Sin as the Plague, and engage thy felf not only never to embrace that Adulteress, but never to come nigh the Door of her House? Prov. 5.8. Thy Vow being like that of the Nazarite, not to drink of this intoxicating Wine, let it be then like his, not to eat any thing that cometh of the Vine from the Kernal to the Husk, Num. 6.3, 4. Abandon Sin and all its Appurtenances; cast out Tobiah and all his Stuff. Retolve to deny thy felf in that which is most defireable, rather than give Satan any Advantage; to abridge thy felf even in that which is lawful, rather than come within the Confines of Sin, or bring thy felf into danger of that which is unlawful. Happy is the Man that feareth always.

Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, neither be Partakers of other Men's Sins, Eph. 5. 11.

2 Tim. 4. 22. We live in a corrupt and degenerate Age, in which Iniquity greatly abounds; our Business indeed is not to judge others, to their own Master they stand or fall; but our Care must be to preserve our selves, and the Purity and Peace of our own Minds: Our Covenant therefore must be,

that

that we will never walk in the Counsel of the Ungodly, nor stand in the way of Sinners, Psal. 1. 1. When David engag'd himself to keep the Commandments of his God, pursuant to that Engagement he said to Evil Doers, Depart from me, Psal. 119. 115. And St. Peter minded his New Converts of the Necessity of this Care, Ast. 2. 40. Save your selves from this untoward Generation.

Let the Psalmists Vow be mine then, Psal. 26. 5: having bated the Congregation of Evil Doers (fuch as Drunkards, Swearers, Filthy Talkers, and Scoffers at Godliness) I will not sit with the Wicked. Tho I cannot avoid being sometimes in the Sight and Hearing of such, yet I will never take those for my chosen Companions, and Bosom Friends in this World, with whom I should dread to have my Portion in the other World. Religion in Rags shall be always valued by me, and Profaneness in Robes despis'd. Having chosen God for my God, his People shall always be my People: Lord gather not my Soul with Sinners. If thou art in good earnest for Heaven, resolve to swim against the Stream, and thou wilt find, that fober Singularity is an excellent Guard to serious Piery: On all that Glory, let there be this Defence.

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Secondly, We must here by a Solemn Vow bind our selves up to all Duty. It is not enough that we depart from Evil, but we must do goed: Tis not enough that we separate our selves from the Service of Sin, and shake off Satan's Iron Yoke; but we must devote our selves to the Service of Christ, and put our Necks, under the sweet and easy Yoke of God's Commandments, with a solemn Promise saithfully to draw in that Yoke all our Days. We need not bind our selves to more than we are already bound to, by the Divine I aw, either expressly, or by Consequence, either as many

mary Duties, or fecondary, in order to them. We are not call'd to lay upon our felves any other Burthen than necessary things, and they are not heavy Burthens, nor grievous to be born: But we must bind our selves faster, and by additional Ties to that which we are already bound to.

1. We must by a solemn Vow oblige our selves to all the Duties of Religion in general. Jacob's Vow must be ours, Gen. 28.21. then the Lord shall be my God, having avouch'd him for mine; I will fear him and love him, delight in him, and depend upon him, worship him and glorify him as my Lord, and my God. Having own'd him as mine, I will ever Eye him as mine, and walk in his Name, Mic. 4. 5. David's Vow must be ours, that we will keep God's righteous Judgments, Psal. 119. 106. that we will keep in the n as our way, keep to them as our Rule; that we will keep them as the Apple of our Eye, keep them always unto the end.

In the Strength of the Grace of Jesus Christ, we must here soleminly promise and vow.

is our great Business in this World to serve the Honour of him that made us, and secure the Happiness we were made for: This we must mind as our Business, and not, as the most do, make a By-business of it. Religion must be our Calling; the Calling we resolve to live in, and hope to live by: In the Services of it we must be constant, and dil gent, and as in our Element. Other things must give way to it, and be made as much as may be, serviceable to it. — And this must be our Covenant with God here, That however we have tristed historio, hencesorward we will mind Religion

ligion as the one thing needful, and not be flothfil in the Bufiness of it, but fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord. And art thou willing (my Soul) thus to devote thy felf intirely to the Service of thy God? Shall that engage thy Cares, fill thy Thoughts, command thy Time, and give Law to the whole Man? Let this matter be settled then in this Day's Vows, and refolve to live and dy

by it.

(2.) That we will make Confeience of infide Godliness. Having in our Covenant given God our Heart, which is that he demands, we must refolve to employ it for him, for without doubt be is a 7ew; he is a Christian that is one inwardly, and that Circumcision, that's Baptism, that's true and pure Religion, which is of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter, Rom. 2. 92. That we are really, which we are inwardly, and they only are the true Worshippers that worship God in the Spirit: This is the Power of Godliness, without which the Form is but a Carcass, but a Shadow. The King's Daughter is all glorious within. This therefore we must resolve, in the Strength of the Grace of God, That we will keep our Hearts with all Diligence, keep them fixed, fixed upon God; that the Defire of our Souls shall be ever towards God; that our Hearts shall be lifted up to God in every Prayer, and their Doors and Gates thrown open to admit his Word; and that our constant care shall be about the bidden Man of the Heart in that which is not corruptible, so approving our selves to God in our Integrity, in every thing we do in Religion.

(3.) That we will live a Life of Communion with God. Without controverly great is this Miftery of Godliness; if there be a Heaven upon Earth, cettainly this is it; by Faith to fet the Lord always before us, having an Eye to him with suitable

Affections

Affections as the first Cause and last End of all things that concern us; and fo having Communion with him in Providences as well as Ordinances; when we receive the common Comforts of every Day from his Hand with Love and Thankfulness; and bear the common Croffes and Disappointments of every Day, as order'd by his Will, with Patience and Submission; when we commit every Day's Cares to him, and manage every Day's Business and Converse for him, having a constant habitual Regard to God in the fettled Principles of the Divine Life, and frequent actual Out-goings of Soul towards him in pious Ejaculations, the genuin Expressions of Devout Affections, then we live a Life of Communion with God. Did we know by experince what it is to live fuch a Life as this, we would not exchange the Pleasures of it for the peculiar Treasures of Kings and Provinces.

Engage thy self then, my Soul, elevate thy self to this Spiritual and Divine Life, that every Day may thus be with thee a Communion Day, and thy constant Fellowship may be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ by the Spirit. Let me resolve henceforward to live, more than hitherto I have done, a Life of Complacency in God, in his Beauty, Bounty and Benignity; a Life of Derpendance upon God, upon his Power, Providence, and Promise; a Life of Devotedness to God, to the command of his Word, the Conduct of his Spirit, and the Disposal of his Providence; and thus to walk with God in all holy Conversation.

(4.) That we will keep Heaven in our Eye, and take up with nothing short of it. We are made for another World, and we must resolve to set our Hearts upon that World, and have it always in our Eye; seeking the things that are above, and slighting things below in comparison with them; as.

those:

Vows to be made at the Lord's Supper. 229. those that are born from Heaven, and bound for Heaven. Bind thy felf, my Soul, with this Bond. that forgetting the things which are behind, as one that hath not yet attain'd, neither is already perfect. thou wilt reach forth to those things that are before : pressing forwards towards the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling, Phil. 3. 13, 14. My Treasure is in Heaven, my Head, and Hope, and Home are there. I shall never be well till I am there; there therefore shall my Heart be, and to that Recompence of Remard I will ever bave respect; with an Eve to that Fey and Glory fet before me in 'tother World, I will by the Grace of God patiently run the Race of Godlines fet before me in this World, Heb: 12. 1, 2.

2. We must by a Solemn Vow oblige our selves to some Duties of Religion in particular. As it is good to enagage our selves by covenant against particular Sins, that by the Help of Resolution our Resistance of them may be invigorated; so it is good to engage our selves to particular Duties, that thereby we may be quicken'd closely and diligently to apply our selves to them, and may see our work before us.

I. We should particularly oblige our selves to these Duties which our own Consciences have charged us with the Neglect of. We have known that good which our own Hearts tell us we have not done; we find upon Resection, it may be, that we have not been constant in our secret Devotion, that we have not done that good in our Families, which, we should have done; we have been, barren in good Discourse, careless of our Duty to the Souls of others, backward to Works of Charity, unsurnish d for, and indisposed to Religious Exercises: In these or other things wherein we are conscious to our selves that

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230 Vows to be made at the Lord's Supper.

we have been defective, we must covenant for the future to be more circumfpect and industrious, that our Works may be found filled up before God. When the Jews in Nehemiah's time made a fure Covenant, wrote it, and feal'd to it, they inferred particular Articles relating to those Branches of God's Service which had been neglected, and made Ordinances for themselves, according to the Ordinances that God had given them, Neh. 10. 32. fo should we do, as an Evidence of the Sincerity of our Repentance for our former Omidions, both of Duty, and in Duty. That work of our Lord wherein we have been most wanting, in that we must covenant to abound most, that thereby we may redeem the time.

2. We should particularly oblige our selves to contribute most to the Support and Advancement of the Life and Power of Godiness in our Hearts. They that have carefully observ'd themselves perhaps can tell what these Religious Exercises are which they have found to be most ferviceable to the Prosperity of their Souls; and by which they have reaped most spiritual Benefit and Advantage. Have our Hearts been most enlarged in secret Devotion? Hath God fometimes mer us in our Closets with special Comforts, and the unusual Manifestations of himself to our Souls? Let us from thence take an Indication, and covenant to be more and longer alone, in fecret Communion with God. Have publick Ordinances been to us as green Pastures, and fat have we fitten down by them with delight? Let us resolve to be so much the more diligent in our Attendance on them, and wait more closely at those Gates where we have so oft been abundantly satisfied. Tho' one Duty must never be allowed to intrench upon another, yet those Duties which we have

Vows to be made at the Lord's Supper. 231 have found to be the most effectual Means of increasing our Acquaintance with God, confirming our Faith in Christ, and furthering us in our way to Heaven, we should with a peculiar Care engage our selves to.

Tho' God hath strictly commanded us the great and necessary Acts of Religious Worship, yet for the Trial of our Holy Ingenuity and Zeal, he hath left it to us to determine many of the Circumstances; that even instituted Sacrifices may be in some respect Free-will Offerings. He hath commanded us to pray, and read the Scriptures, but hath not told us just how oft and how long we must pray and read; here therefore 'tis proper for us to bind our selves to that which will best anfwer the Intention of the Command in general, best agree with the Circumstances we are in, and best advance the Interests of our Souls: In which we must take heed on the one Hand that we indulge not Spiritual Sloth by contenting our felves with the least Proportions of time that may be, much less by confining our selves to them; and on the other Hand that we make not Religious Exercises a Task and Burthen to our selves, by binding our selves to that at all times, which in an extraordinary Pang of Devotion is easy and little enough. In making Resolutions of this kind, we ought to be cautious, and not basty to utter any thing before God, that we may not afterwards fay before the Angel, It was an Error, Eccl. 5. 2, 6. Tho' such is the Decay of Christian Zeal in the Age we live in, that few need this Caution, yet it must be inserted, because, It is a Snare to a Man to devour that which is Holy, and after Vows to make enquiry. lim det Flore lenviut purpose (boses

3. We fhould particularly oblige our felves to those Duties by which we have Opportunity of glorifying God, adorning our Profession, and doing good in our Places. We are not born for our selves, nor bought for our felves, we were born for God, and bought for Christ, and both as Men, and as Christians, we are Members one of another, and we ought to fit down and confider how we may trade with the Talent we are intrusted with, tho' it be but one, to the Glory of our Creator, the Honour of our Redeemer, and the Good of our Brethren. The liberal and pious devise liberal things, and pious things, and oblige themselves to them. Think then, my Soul, not only what must I do, but what may I do for God, who hath done fuch great things for me? How may I be serviceable to the Interefts of God's Kingdom among Men? What can I do to promote the Strength and Beauty of the Church, and the Welfare of precious Souls? And if we have thought of any thing of this kind, that falls within the Sphere of our Activity (tho' but a low and narrow Sphere) it may do well when we find our selves in a good Frame at the Table of the Lord, by a folemn Vow, with due Caution, to oblige our felves to it, that we may not leave room for a treacherous Heart to start back. Thus 3acob, for the perpetuating of the Memory of God's Favour to him, made it a part of his Vow, Gen. 28. 22. This Stone which I have fet for a Pillar shall be God's House. Thus Hannah vow'd that if God would give her a Son, the would give him to the Lord, I Sam. I. II. Tis one of the Rules prescrib'd concerning, Coff or Pains bestow'd for pious and charitable Uses, 2 Cor. 9, 7. Every Man according as he proposeth in his Heart, so let him give, so let him do: Now lest that purpose should fail, and come to nothing, 'tis good when the matter of it 15 Voios to be made at the Lord's Supper. 233 is well digested, to bring it to a Head in a solemn Promise, that the Tempter seeing us stedsastly resolv'd, he may cease solliciting us to alter our purpose.

4. We should particularly oblige our selves to the Duties of our respective Callings and Relations. Much of Christian Obedience lies in these Instances, and in them we are especially call'd to serve God and our Generation, and should therefore bind our selves to do so.

They that are in Places of Publick Trust and Power, should here oblige themselves by a solemn Vow to be faithful to the Trusts reposed in them, and to use their Power for the Publick Good. They that rule over Men, must here covenant that they will be just, ruling in the Fear of God. Their Oaths must here be ratified, and David's Promife must be theirs, Pfal. 75. 2. When I shall receive the Congregation, I will judge uprightly. This ought to be feriously consider'd by all those who receive this Holy Sacrament at their Admission into the Magistracy. When Publicans and Soldiers submitted to the Baptism of John, and thereby oblig'd themfelves to live a Holy Life, they ask'd and receiv'd of John Instructions how to discharge the Duty of their respective Employments, Luk. 3. 12, 13, 14. for when we vow to keep God's Commandments, though we must have a universal respect to them all, yet we must have a special regard to those Precepts which relate to the Calling wherein we are

The Stewards of the Mysteries of God when they administer this Ordinance to others, receive it themselves as an Obligation upon them to stir up the Gift that is in them, that they may make full proof of their Ministry. Their Ordination Vows are repeated.

234 Vows to be made at the Lord's Supper.

peated, and confirm'd in every Sacrament, and they are again sworn to be true to Christ and Souls. He that ministreth about Holy things, must here oblige himself to wait on his ministring, be that teacheth on teaching, and he that exhorteth on

exhortation, Rom. 12. 7, 8.

Governours of Families must here oblige themfelves as David did, to walk before their Houses in a perfect way, with a perfect Heart, and must affix this Seal to Joshua's Resolution, that whatever others do, they and their Houses will serve the Lord, Psal. 101. 2. 30s. 24. 15. Here they must confecrate to God a Church in their House, and bind themselves to fer up, and always to keep up both an Altar and a Throne for God in their Habitation, that they may approve themselves the Spiritual Seed of faithful Abraham, who was famous for Family Religion. 'Tis with this Intent (I fuppose) that the Rubrick of the Publick Establishment declares it convenient. That new married Per-Sons should receive the Holy Communion at the time of their Marriage, or at the first Opportunity after their Marriage; that being engag'd to each other in a new Relation, they may folemnly engage themfelves to discharge the Duties of that Relation in the Fear of God.

And Inferiour Relations must here oblige themselves to do the Duty they owe to their Superiours; Children to be dutiful to their Parents, Servants to be obedient to their Masters, yea, all of us to be subject one to another. They that are under the Yoke (as the Apostle speaks, 7 Tim. 6. 1.) may here make the Yoke they are under, easy to them, by obliging themselves to draw in it from a Principle of Duty to God, and Gratitude to Christ, which will both santisty and sweeten the hardest Ser-

vices and Submillions.

peaced,

Whatever our Employments are, and our Dealings with Men, we must here promise and vow that we will be strictly just and honest in them; that whatever Temptations we may be under to the contrary at any time, we will make conscience of rendring to all their Due, and of speaking the Truth from the Heart; That we will walk uprightly, and work Righteousness, dispise the Gain of Oppression, and shake our Hands from holding of Bribes, knowing that they who do fo, shall dwell on high, their Place of Defence Shall be the Munitions of Rocks, Bread shall be given them, and their Waters shall be Sure; Isa. 33. 15, 16. We find it upon record to the Honour of Christ's Holy Religion, when it was first planted in the World, that Pliny, a Heathen Magistrate, and a Persecutor of Christianity, giving an Account of the Emperour Trajan, of what he had discover'd concerning the Christians (in an Epistle yet extant) acknowledgeth that in their Religious Assemblies they bound themselves by a Sacrament ('tis the very word he uses) Non in Scelus aliquod, sed ne furta, ne Latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent ; ne fidem fallerent, ne Depositum appellati abnegarent. That is, they bound themselves not to do any ill thing, but that they would not rob, or steal, or commit adultery; that they would never be false to any Trust reposed in them, never deny any thing that was put into their Hands to keep; and the like. The same is still the true Intent and Meaning of this Service: Tis the Bond of a Covenant added to the Bond of a Command, That we do justly, love Mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

Come then, my Soul, come under these Bonds; come willingly and chearfully under them; he that bears an honest Mind, doth not startle at Assurances; be not afraid to promise that which thou art

already

236 Vows to be made at the Lord's Supper.

already bound to do; for these Vows will rather faciliate thy Duty, than add to the Difficulty of it; the faster thou findest thy self fix'd to that which is good, the less there will be of uneasy Hæsitation, and wavering concerning it, and the less Danger of

being tempted from it.

Only remember, that all these Vows must be made with an intire Dependance upon the Strength and Grace of Jefus Christ to enable us to make 'em good. We have a great deal of Reason to distrust our selves, so weak and treacherous are our Hearts: Peter betray'd himself, by confiding in himself when he said, Tho' I should dy with thee, yet will I not deny thee: But we have Encouragement enough to trust in Christ; in his Name therefore let us make our Vows, in his Grace let us be strong; surely in the Lord alone have we Righteoufness and Strength: He is the Surety of the Covenant for both Parties; into his Custody therefore, and under the Protection of his Grace, let us put our Souls, and we shall find he is able to keep what we commit to him.

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CHAP. XII.

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Directions concerning the Frame of our Spirits, when we come away from this Ordinance.

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Hey that have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ at the Table of the Lord, whose Hearts are enlarged to fend forth the Workings of pious and devout Affections towards God, and to take in the Communications of Divine Light, Life, and Love from him, cannot but fay, as Peter did upon the Holy Mount, Lord it is good for us to be here; here let us make Tabernacles; they fit down under the refreshing Shadow of this Ordinance with delight, and its Fruit is sweet unto their Taste: Here they could dwell all the Days of their Life, beholding the Beauty of the Lord, and enquiring in his Temple: But it is not a continual Feaft; we must come down from this Mountain; these sweet and precious Minutes are soon number'd and finish'd; Supper is ended, thanks is return'd, the Guests are dismis'd with a Blessing; The Hymn is sung, and we go out to the Mount of Olives; in this Ferusalem the City of our Solemnities, we have not a continuing City; Jacob hath an Opportunity of wreftling with the Angel, a while, but he must let him go, for the Day breaks, and he hath a Family to look after, a Journey to profecute, and the Affairs thereof call for his Attendance, Gen:

Gen. 32. 26: We must not be always at the Lord's Table; the High Priest himself must not be always within the Veil, he must go out again to the People when his Service is perform'd: Now it ought to be as much our Care to return in a right. manner from the Ordinance, as to approach in a right manner to the Ordinance. That Caution is here needful, 2 John 8. Look to your selves that we lose not those things which we have wrought -- which we have gained -- fo some read it. Have we in this Ordinance wrought any thing, or gain'd any thing that is good, we are concern'd to fee to it that we do not undo what we have wrought, and let flip what we have gain'd. When the Solemnity is done, our Work is not done, still we must be pressing forwards in our Duty. This perhaps is the Mystery of that Law in Ezekiel's Temple-Service, Ezek. 46. 9. that they should not return from worshipping before the Lord in the Solemn Feafts thro' the Jame Gate by which they enter'd in, but by that over against it. Forgetting those things which are behind, still we must reach forth to those things which are before.

Let us enquire then what is to be done at our coming away from the Ordinance, for the preferving and improving of the Impressions of it.

First, We should come from this Ordinance admiring the Condescensions of the Divine Grace to us. Great are the Honours which have here been done us, and the Favours which here we have been admitted to: The God that made us hath taken us into Covenant and Communion with himself: The King of Kings hath entertain d us at his Table, and there we have been scalled with the Dainties of Heaven; abundantly satisfied with the Goodness of his House; exceeding great and precious Promises have

have here been feal'd to us, and Earnests given us of the Eternal Inheritance; now if we know our felves, this cannot but be the matter of our Wonder, our joyful and yet awful Wonder. and motal with a great fixedite is of Mind.

I. Confidering our Meaness by Nature, we have reason to wonder that the Great God should thus advance us. Higher than Heaven is above the Earth is God above us: Between Heaven and Earth there is, tho' a vast, yet only a finite Distance, but between God and Man there is an infinite Disproportion. What is Man then? (Man that is a Worm, and the Son of Man that is a Worm) that he should be thus visited and regarded? thus dignified and prefer'd? That Favour done to Ifrael founds great, Pfal. 78. 25. Man did eat Angels Food; but here Man is feafted with that which was never Angels Food, the Flesh and Blood of the Son of Man, which give Life to the World. Solomon himself flood amaz'd at God's condescending to take pop session of that magnificent Temple he had built, 2 Cron. 6. 18. But will God in very Deed dwell with Men on the Earth? And, which is more, shall Men on the Earth dwell in God, and make the most High their Habitation? If great Men look with respect upon those that are much their Inferiors, tris because they expect to receive Honory and Advant tage by them; but can a Man be proficable uras God? No, he cannot : Our Goodness Jewendenby our unto him; he was from Eternity happy without us, and would have been so to Eternity, if welliad never been, or had been miferable; but we are undone, undone for ever, if his Goodness extend notos us: He needs not our Services, but we need his Favours; Men adopt because they are Childlest. but God adopts us purely because we are Inthertels. Twas no excellency in us that recommended us to his Love, but Pover y and Misery made as proper Objects of his Pity.

Come then, my Soul, and compose thy felf, as King David did, when having received a gracious Message from Heaven, assuring him of God's kind Intentions to him and his Family, he went in, and with a great fixedness of Mind, Jate before the Lord; and fay as he said; Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my House that thou hast brought me hitherto? that I should be so kindly invited to the Table of the Lord, and so splendidly treated there? That one fo mean and worthless as I am, the poorest Dunghill Worm that ever call'd God Father, should be plac'd among the Children, and fed with the Children's Bread: And yet as if this were a small thing in thy fight, O Lord God, thou hast spoken al-So concerning thy Servant for a while to come, even as far as Eternity it felf reaches, and thus thou hast regarded me according to the Estate of a Man of high Degree, tho I am nothing, yea, less than nothing, and Vanity; And is this the manner of men, O Lord God? Could Men expect to be thus favour'd? No. But thou givest to Men not according to their Powerty, but according to thy Riches in Glory: Do great Men use to condescend thus? No, it is usual with them to take state upon them, and to oblige their Inferiours to keep their Distance; but we have to do with one that is God and not Man, whose Thoughts of Love are as much above ours, as his Thoughts of Wisdom are: And therefore, as it follows there, What can David Say more unto thee? What account can I give of this unaccountable Favour? 'tis for thy Word's Sake, and according to thine own Heart, for the Performance of thy Purposes and Promises, that thou bast done all these great things, to make thy Servant know them, 2 Sam. 7. 18, -- 21. I Chron. 17. 16. &c.

2. Confidering our Vileness by Sin, we have yet more reason to wonder that the Holy God should thus favour us. We are not only Worms of the Earth,

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below his Cognizance, but a Generation of Vipers. obnoxious to his Curses; not only unworthy of his Love and Favour, but worthy of his Wrath and Displeasure: How is it then that we are brought so near unto him, who deserv'd to have been sentenc'd to an Eternal Separation from him? He hath faid, The Foolish shall not stand in his Sight, Pfal. 5. 5. Foolish we know we are, and yet we are call'd to fit at his Table, being through Christ reconciled to him, and brought into Covenant with him. Justice might have fet us as Criminals at his Bar, but behold Mercy fets us as Children at his Board, and it is a Miracle of Mercy, Mercy that is the Wonder of Angels, and will be the Eternal Transport of Glorified Saints. See how much we owe to the Redeemer, by whom we have access into this Grace.

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to admire it; I have much more reason to say than Mephibosheth had, when David took him to eat Bread at his Table continually, 2 Sam. 9. 8. What is thy Servant, that thou should'st look upon such a dead Dog as I am? I am less than the least of God's Mercies, and yet he hath not withheld the greatest from me; I have forfeited the Comforts of my own Table, and yet I am feasted with the Comforts of the Lord's Table; I deserve to have had the Cup of the Lord's Indignation put into my Hand, and to have drunk the Dregs of it, but behold I have been treated with the Cup of Salvation. Were ever Traitors made Favourites? fuch Traitors made fuch Favourites? who can sufficiently admirethe Love of the Redeemer, who received Gifts for Men, yea, even for the Rebellious also, upon their return to their Allegiance, that the Lord God might

dwell among them, Pfal. 68. 18. And have I shar'd

in these Gifts notwithstanding my Rebellions?

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Let me therefore set my felf, and stir up my self

This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous. Whence is this to me, that not the Mother of my Lord, but my Lordhimself should come to me? That he should thus prevent me, thus distinguish me with his Favours; Lord how is it that thou wilt manifest thy self to me, and not unto the World?

Secondly, We should come from this Ordinance lamenting our own manifold Defects and Instrmities in our Attendance upon God in it. When we look back upon the Solemnity, we find that as we cannot speak well enough of God and of his Grace, so we cannot speak ill enough of our selves, and of the Folly and Treachery of our own Hearts. Now, Conscience, thou art charg'd in God's Name to do thine Office, and to accomplish a diligent Search: Review the Workings of the Soul in this Ordinance, distinctly and impartially.

And (1.) If upon Search thon findest cause to fuspect that all hath been done in Hypocrify, then fet the Soul a trembling, for its Condition is fad, and highly dangerous. If I have been here pretending to join my felf in a Covenant with God while I continue in League with the World and the Flesh; pretending to receive the Pardon of my Sins when I never repented of them, nor defign'd to forfake them; I have but deceiv'd my felf, and have reason to fear that I shall perish at last, with a Lie in my Right-Hand. While this Conviction is fresh and sensible, let care be taken to mend the matter; and bleffed be God it may be mended. Have I reason to fear that my Heart is not night in the Sight of God, and that therefore I have no part nor lot in the matter, but am in the Gall of Bitterness and Bond of Iniquity? I must then take the Advice which Peter gave to Smon Magus, when he perceiv'd that to be his Condition, after he had

Due return from the Lord's Supper. 243
receiv'd the Sacrament of Baptism, Ast. 8. 21,
22, 23. Repent therefore of this thy Wickedness, and
pray God, if perhaps the Thought of thine Heart may
be forgiven thee. Let that be done with a double
care after the Ordinance which should have been

done before.

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But (2.) If upon Search thou findest that there hath been thro' Grace, Truth in the inward part, yet fer the Soul a blushing, for it hath not been cleansed according to the Purification of the Sanctuary. When we would do good, Evil is present with us, our Wine is mix'd with Water, and our Gold with Dross, and who is there that doth good and sinneth not, even in his doing good? We find by fad Experience, That the Sons of God never come together. but Satan comes also among them, and stands at their Right-hand to refift them: And that wherever we go we carry about with us the Remainders of Corruption, a Body of Death, which inclines us to that which is Evil, and indisposes us to that which is good. If the Spirit be willing, yet, alas, the Flesh is weak, and we cannot do the things that we would.

O what reason have I to be asham'd of my self, and blush to lift up my Face before God when I review the Frame of my Heart during my Attendance on this Ordinance! How short have I come of doing my Duty according as the Work of the Day requir'd! My Thoughts should have been fixed, and the Subjects presented to them to fix upon were curious enough to engage them, and copious enough to employ them, and yet they went with the Food's Eyes into the Ends of the Earth, and wander dafter a thousand Impertinencies. A little thing serv'd to give them a Diversion from the Contemplation of the great Things let before me: My Affections should have been rais'd, and elevated, but they were low and flat, and little mov'd; if sometimes they frem'd to sear

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upwards, yet they soon sunk down again, and the things which remain'd were ready to die. My Defires were cold and indifferent, my Faith weak and unactive, nor were there any workings of Soul in me proportionable to the Weightiness of the Transaction. Through my own Dulness, and Deadness, and Inadvertency, I lost a deal of time out of a little, and slipt much of that, which might have been done and got there, if I had been close and

diligent.

This Thought forbids us to entertain a good Conceit of our felves, and our own Performances, ro to build any Confidence upon our own Merit. While we are conscious to our felves of so much Infirmity cleaving to our best Services, we must acknowledge that Boasting is for ever excluded; we have nothing to glory of before God, nor can we challenge a Reward as of Debt, but must ascribe all to Free Grace. What Good there is in us, is all of God, and he must have the Honour of it: But there is also much amiss, which is all of our selves, and we must take the Shame of it; lamenting those sad Effects of the Remainder of Sin in us, which we feel to our loss when we drawnigh to God in Holy Ordinances.

This Thought obligeth us likewise to rely on Christ alone, for acceptance with God in all our Religious Duties: He is that great and gracious High Priest, who bears the Iniquity of the Holy Things, which the Children of Israel hallow in their Holy Gifts, that notwithstanding that Iniquity, when it is repented of, the Gifts may be accepted before the Lord, Exod. 28. 38. Of his Righteousness therefore we must make mention, even of his only; for the most Spiritual Sacrifices are acceptable to

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Thirdly, We should come from this Ordinance rejoicing in Jesus Christ, and in that great Love wherewith he bath loved us. From this Feast we should go to our Tents, as the People went from Solomon's Feast of Dedication, joyful and glad in heart for all the goodness that the Lord bath done by David his fervant, for Ifrael his people, 1 Kin. 8. 66. They that went forth weeping, must come back rejoicing, asthey have cause, if they bring their Sheaves with them, Pfal. 126. 5, 6. Hath God here lifted up the Light of his Countenance upon us? that should put Gladness into our Hearts, Pfal. 4. 6, 7: Have we here lifted up our Souls to God, and join'd our selves to him in an Everlasting Covenant? We have reason with the baptized Eunuch, to go on our way rejoicing, Act. 8. 39. The Day of our Espousals should be the Day of the Gladness of our Hearts, Cant. 3. 11. This Cup of Bleifing was design'd to be a Cup of Cinfolatim, and its Wine ordain'd to make glad Man's Heart, to make glad the Heart of the New Man: Having therefore drunk of this Cup, let our Souls make their Boast in the Lord, and sing in his ways, and call him their exceeding Joy.

Let this Holy Joy give check to Carnal Mirth; for having seen so much reason to rejoice in Christ Jesus, we deceive our selves if we rejoice in a thing of nought; we are not forbidden to rejoice, but our Joy must be turn'd into the right Chanel, and our Mirth sanctified, which will suppress and silence that Laughter that is mad. The Frothiness of a vain Mind must be cur'd by a religious chear-

fulness, as well as by a religious Seriousness.

Let it give check also to the Sorrow of the World, and that inordinate Grief for outward Crosses, which sinks the Spirits, dries the Bones, and worketh Death. Why art thou cast down, and M 3 why

why disquieted for a light Affiction, which is but for a Moment, when even that is so far from doing thee any real Prejudice, that it works for thee a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory. Learn, my Soul, to sit down upon the Ruins of all thy Creature-Comforts, by a wither'd Fig-Tree, a fruitless Vine, and a blasted Crop, and even then to sing to the Praise and Glory of God, as the God of thy Salvation. When thou art full, enjoy God in all; when thou art empty, enjoy all in God.

Let this Holy Joy express it self in Praises to God, and Encouragements to our selves.

1. Let it expressit self in the thank ful Acknow-I doment of the Favour, we have received from God. As Spiritual Joy must be the Heart and Soul of Divine Praise, so Divine Praise must be the Breath and Speech of Spiritual Joy. Whatever. makes us joyful must make us thankful: Do we come from this Ordinance easy, and pleasant, and greatly refresh'd with the Goodness of God's House? Let the High Praises of God then be in our Mouths, and in our Hearts. This is a proper time for us to be engaged with great fixedness, and enlarg'd with great fluency in this Service. If we must give thanks for the Mercies we receive at our own Table, which relate only to a perishing Body, and a dving Life, much more ought we to give thanks for the Mercies we receive at God's Table, which relate to an immortal Soul, and Eternal Life. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou Shalt bless the Lordthy God, for the good Land which be hath given thee, Deut. 8. 10. Bless him for a Canaan on Earth, a Land of Light, a Valley of Vision, in which God is known, and his Name. great, and for the comfortable Lot thou haft in

Due Return from the Lord's Supper. 247 that Land, a Name among God's People, and a Nail in his Holy Place, a Portion in Immanuel's Land: Bless him for a Canaan in Heaven, which he hath given thee the Promise and Prospect of, that Land flowing with Milk and Honey. Rejoice

in hope of that, and fing in hope.

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Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and let all that is within thee, all thy Thoughts, and all thy Powers be employ'd in bleffing his Holy Name; and all little enough. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, good to all, good to Israel, good to me. I will mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord, and the Praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, &c. Isa. 63. 7. Give Glory to the exalted Redeemer, and mention to his Praise the great things he hath done for us. Worthy is the Lamb that was flain, to take the Book, and open the Seals; worthy to wear the Crown and Iway the Sceptre, for ever worthy to receive Bleffing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power; worthy to be adord by the innumerable Company of Angels, and the Spirits of just Men made perfect; worthy to be attended with the constant Praises of the Universal Church; worthy of the innermost and uppermost place of my Heart; of the best Affections I can consecrate to his Praise, and the best Services I can do to his Name: For he was flain, and hath redeemed us to God by his Blood; and hath made us to our God Kings and Priests. He hath loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood; a Note of Praise, which the Angels themselves cannot fing, tho they have many a Song that we are Strangers to. He loved me, and gave himself for me, to fatisfy for my Sin, and to obtain Eternal Redemption for me. Bleffed and for ever bleffed be the Great and Holy Name of the Lord Jesus, that Name which is as Ointment poured forth, that Name which is above every Name; which is M 4

worthy of, and yet exalted far above all Bleffing and

Praife.

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And whenever we confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, let it always be done to the Glory of God the Father, Phil. 2. 11. His Kindness and Love to Man was the Original String, and first Wheel in the Work of our Redemption: 'Twas he that gave his only begootten Son, deliver'd him up for us all, and who was in Christ reconciling the World unto bimself; Glory, therefore, Eternal Glory be unto God in the highest, for in Christ there is on Earth Peace, and Good Will towards Men. God hath in Christ glorified himself, we must therefore in Christ glorify him, and make all our Joys and Praises to centre in him. In the Day of our Rejoycing this must be the Burthen of all our Songs, Bleffed be God for Jesus Christ. Thanks be unto God for this unspeakable Gift, the Foundation of all other Gifts.

2. Let this Holy Joy speak Encouragement to our felves, chearfully to preceed in our Christian Course. The Comfort we have had in our Covenant Relation to God, and Interest in Christ, should put a Sweetness into all our Enjoyments, and sanctify them to us; we must see the Love of God in them, and tast that he is gracious, and this must make them Comforts indeed to us. See the Curse removed from them, see a Blessing going along with them, and then, Go thy way, eat thy Bread with joy, and drink thy Wine with a merry Heart, for God now accepteth thy Works, Eccl. 9. 7. Have we good Ground to hope that thro' Grace our Works are accepted of God? If we fincerely aim at God's Acceptance, make that our End, and labour for it, with an Eye to Christ as Mediator, we may hope that our Persons and Persormances are accepted: If we accept God's Works, accept the Disposals of his Providence, and the Offers of his Grace with a humble

humble Acquiescence in both, that will be a good Evidence that he accepts our Works. And if so, we have reason to rejoice with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory. Eat thy Bread with joy, for it is thy Father's Gift, the Bread wherewith the Lord thy God seeds thee in this Wilderness, thro' which he is leading thee to the Land of Promise: Drink, thy Wine with a merry Heart, remembring Christ's love more than Wine: What thou hast, tho' mean and scanty, thou hast it with the Blessing of God, which will make the little thou hast, better than the Riches of many wicked, Pfal. 27. 16.

Rejoice in the Lord now, O my Soul, rejoice in him always: Having kept this Feast with Gladness, (as Hezekiah and his People did, 2 Chron. 30. 23.) carry with thee some of the Comforts of God's Table to thine own, and there eat thy Meat with Gladness, as those Primitive Christians did, Ast. 2. 46. Live a Life of Holy chearfulness, and the

For of the Lord will be thy Strength.

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Fourthly, We should come from this Ordinance much quicken'd to every good Work. Seeing our felves compassed about here with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, bound by so many Engagements, invited by fo many Encouragements, and obligid to God and Godliness by so many Ties of Duty, Interest, and Gratirude, let us lay aside every Weight, and the Sin that most easily besets us, whatever it is, especially the Evil Heart of Unbelief, which is our great Hindrance, and let us run with Patiencethe Race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, Heb. 12. 1, 2. Let the Covenants we have here renewed; and the Comforts we have here received, make us more ready to every good Duty, andmore lively in it; more active and zealous for the Glory of God, the Service of our Generation, and the Welfare and Prosperity of our own Souls. ME

From what we have feen and done here, we may fetch powerful Considerations to shame us out of our Slothfulness, and our Backwardness to that which is good, and to stir us up to the utmost diligence in our Master's Work.

When Jacob had receiv'd a gracious Visit from God, and had made a solemn Vow to him, Gen. 28. 12, 20. it follows Chap. 29. 1. Then Jacob went on his way. The Original Phrase is observable, Then Jacob lift up his Feet. After that comfortable Night he had at Bethel, knowing himself to be in the Way of his Duty, he proceeded with a great deal of Chearfulness. That strengthned the weak Hands and confirm'd the seeble Knees: Thus should our Communion with God in the Lord's Supper enlarge our Hearts to run the way of God's Commandments: After such an Ordinance we should lift up our Feet in the way of God, that is, (as it is said of Jehosaphat, 2 Chron. 17. 6.) we should lift up our Hearts in those ways, abiding and abounding in the Work of the Lord.

Rouze up thy felf now, my Soul, from thy Spiritual flumber; up, and be doing, for the Lord is with thee. Awake, awake, put on thy Strength, put forth thy Strength, that thou may'st push on thy Holy War, thy Holy Work with Vigour; Shake thy self from the Dust, to which thou hast too much cleaved, loofe thy self from the Bands of thy Neck, with which thou haft been too much clog'd, Isa. 52. 1, 2. Meditate more fixedly, pray more eaftly, refift Sin more resolutely, keep Sabbaths. more chearfully, do good more readily. Thou hast heard the Sound of a going in the tops of the Mulberry-Trees, plain Indications of the Presence of God with thee, therefore now thou shalt bestir thy Jeif, 2 Sam. 5. 24. Let the Comforts of this Ord nance imp thy Wings, that thou may'ft foar upwards. Due Return from the Lord's Supper. 251 wards, upwards towards God; let them oyl thy Wheels, that thou may'st press forwards, forwards towards Heaven: Let God's Gifts to theestir up his Gifts in thee.

Fifthly, We should come from this Ordinance with a watchful Fear of Satan's Wiles, and a firm Refolution to stand our Ground against them. Whatever Comfort and Enlargement we have had in this Ordinance, still we must remember that we are but girding on the Harness, and therefore we have no reason to boost or be secure, as tho we had put it off. When we return to the World again, we must remember that we go among Snares, and must provide ac-

cordingly: 'Tis our Wisdom to do so.

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1. Let us therefore fear. He that travels with a rich Treasure about him, is in most danger of being fer upon, and is most afraid of being rob'd. The Ship that's richly laden, is the Pyrate's Prize. If we come away from the Lord's Table replenish'd with the Goodness of God's House, and the Riches of the Covenant, we must expect the Assaults of our Spiritual Enemies, and not be secure. A ftrong Guard was constantly kept upon the Temple, and there needs one upon the Living Temples. The Mystical Song represents the Bed which is Solomon's, thus furrounded by valiant Men, of the valiant of Israel, because of fear in the night, Cant. 3.7.8. The Holy Ghost this fignifying, that Believers in this World are in a Military State, and the Followers of Christ must be his Souldiers. They that work the good work of Faith, must fight the good Fight of Faith.

We must always stand upon our Guard, for the good Man of the House knows not at what Hour the Thief will come; but this we know, that immediately after our Saviour was baptiz'd; and own'd by a Voice from Heaven, he was led into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil, Mar.

4. 1. and that immediately after he had administred the Lord's Supper to his Disciples, he told them plainly; Satan bath defired to have you. (izninovalo auss, he hath challeng'd you) that he may fift you as Wheat, Luk. 22. 31. and what he said to them then, he faith to all, Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation, Mat. 26. 41. We must then double our Guard against Temptations to rash Anger, and study to be more than ordinarily meek. and quier, lest by the Tumults and Transports of Passion, the Holy Spirit be grieved and provoked to withdraw. If we have in this Ordinance received Christ Jesus the Lord, let a strict charge be given, like that of the Spoule, by the Roes and by the Hinds of the Field, that nothing be faid, nothing done to stir up or awake our Love until he please, Cant. 2. 7. Peace being spoken, Peace made, let us be afraid of every thing that may give a Disturbance to it. We should also watch against the Inroads of worldly Cares and Fears, left they make a Descent upon us after a Sacrament, and spoil us of the Comforts we have there receiv'd.

But with a particular care we must watch against the Workings of Spiritual Pride, after a Sacrament. When our Lord Jesus first instituted this Ordinance, and made his Disciples Partakers of it, they were so elevated with the Honour of it, that not content to be all thus great, a Contest immediately arose among them, which of them Should be greatest, Luke 22. 24. And when St. Paul had been in the third Heavens, he was in danger of being exalted above measure, with the abundance of the Revelations, 2 Cor. 12.7. We therefore have cause to fear lest this dead Fly spoil all our precious Ointment, and to keep a very strict and jealous Eye upon our own Hearts, that they be not lifted up with Pride, lest we fall into the Condemnation Due return from the Lord's Supper. 253 demnation of the Devil, I Tim. 3.6. Let us dread the first Risings of Self-conceit, and suppress them; for what have we that we have not received? and if we have received it, why then do we boast,

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I Cer. 4. 7. 2. Let us therefore fix; and let our Hearts be established with the Grace here receiv'd. What we have done in this Ordinance, we must go away firmly resolv'd to abide by all our days. I am now fix'd, immoveably fix'd for Christ and Holiness, against Sin and Satan: The matter is settled, never to be call'd in question again, I will serve the The Bargain is struck, the Knot is ty'd, the Debate is come up to a final Resolve, and here I fix as one stedfastly resolv'd, with purpose of Heart to cleave unto the Lord. No room is left to parley with a Tempration; I am a Christian, a confirmed Christian, and by the Grace of God a Christian I will live and die, and therefore, Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offence to me. My Resolutions in which before I waver'd, and was unfteddy, are now come to a Head, and are as a Nail in a sure place: I am now at a point; I have open'd my Mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back. (Jud. 11.35.) and therefore by the Grace of God. I am determin'd to go forward, and not so much as look back, or wish for a Discharge from those Engagements. I have chosen the way of Truth, and therefore in thy Strength, Lord, I will flick to the Testimonies; Psal. 119. 30, 31. Now my Foot stands in an even place, well shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace. I am now like a strong Man refreshed with Wine, resolv'd to resist the Devil, that he may flee from me, and never yield to him.

Sixthly, We should come from this Ordinance praying; lifting up our Hearts to God in Ejacualatory Petitions, and retiring as soon as may be

for:

for solemn Prayer. Not only before and in the Duty, but after it we have occasion to offer up our Desires to God, and setch in Strength and Grace from him.

Two things we should be humbly earnest with God in Prayer for, after this Solemnity, and we are furnished from the Mouth of Holy David with very Emphatical and Expressive Petitions, for them both: We may therefore take with us those Words in addressing to God.

1. We must pray, That God will fulfil to us those Promises which he was graciously pleas'd to feal to us in this Ordinance. David's Prayer for this is, I Chron. 17.23. Now Lord, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy Servant, and concerning his House, be established for ever, and do as thou bast said. God's Promises in the Word are defign'd to be our Pleas in Prayer, and we receive the Grace of God in them in vain, if we do not. make that use of them, and sue out the Benefits convey'd and fecur'd by them. These are Talents to be traded with, and improv'd as the Guide of our Defires, and the Ground of our Faith in Prayer, and we must not hide them in a Napkin. Having here taken hold of the Covenant, thus we must take hold on God for Covenant Mercies. Lord, remember the Word unto thy Servant, upon which then hast caused me to hope, Pfal. 119. 49. thou haft not only given me the Word to hope in, but the Heart to hope in it: 'Tis a Hope of thy own raising, and thon wilt not defiroy, by a Disappointment, the Work of thy own Hands.

Come therefore, O my Soul, come, order thy cause before him, and fill thy Mouth with Arguments. Lord, Is not this the Word which thou hast spoken,

Sin.

Due Return from the Lord's Supper. 255 In Shall not have Dominion over you; the God of Peace shall tread Satan under your Feet; there shall no Temptation take you but such as is common to Men. and the faithful God will never suffer you to be tempted above what you are able. Lord, be it unto thy Servant according to these Words! Is not this the Word which thou hast spoken? That all things shall work for good to them that love thee; That thou wilt be to them a God All-sufficient, their Shield, and their exceeding great Reward; that thou wilt give them Grace and Glory, and withhold no good thing from them; that thou wilt never fail them, nor for sake them: Now Lord, let those Words which thou hast spoken concerning thy Servant (and many other the like) be established for ever, and do as thou hast faid, for they are the Words upon which thou haft caused me to hope. Alegar newster and

2. We must pray, That he will enable us to fulfil those Promises which we have made to him in this Ordinance. David's Prayer for this is, 1 Chron. 29. 18. O Lord God of Abraham, Maae, and of Israel our Fathers, keep this for ever in the Imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare (or, confirm) their Hearts unto thee. Have there been some good Affections, good Defires, and good Resolutions in the Imagination of the Thoughts of our Heart at this Ordinance, some good Impressions made upon us, and some good Expressions drawn from us by it? We cannot but be fensible how apt we are to lose the good we have wrought, and therefore it is our Wildom, by Prayer to commit the keeping of it to God, and earnestly to beg of him effectual Grace throughly to furnish us for every good Word and Work, and throughly to fortify us against every evil Word and Work. We made our Promises in the Strength of

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the Grace of God, that strength we must therefore pray for, that we may be able to make good our Promises. Lord, maintain thine own Interest in my Soul; let thy Name be ever hallowed there, Thy Kingdom come, and thy Will be done in my Heart as it is done in Heaven.

When we come away from this Ordinance, we return to a cooling, tempting, distracting World, as when Moses came down from the Mount, where he had been with God, he found the Camp of Israel dancing about the Golden Calf, to his great disturbance, Exod. 32. 19. In the midst of such Sorrows, and fuch Snares as we are compass'd about with here, we shall find it no easy matter to preserve the Peace and Grace which we hope we have obtain'd at the Lord's Table; we must therefore put our felves under the Divine Protection Methinks it was with an affecting Air of Tenderness, that Christ said concerning his Difciples when he was leaving them, John. 17. 11. Now I am no more in the World, the Days of my Temptation are at an end, but these are in the World, they have their Trial yet before them; What then shall I do for them? Holy Father, keep through thine own Name those whom thou hast given me. That Prayer of his was both the great Example, and the great Encouragement of our Prave ers. Now at the close of a Sacrament it is feafonable thus to address our selves to God. I have not yet put off this Body: I am not yet got clear of this World; yet I am a Traveller exposid to Thieves, yet I am a Souldier expos'd to Enemies; Holy Father, keep through thine own Name the Graces and Comforts thou boff given me, for they are thine. Mine own Hands are not sufficient for me, O let thy Grace be for to preferve me to the Heavenly Kingdom. ImmeImmediately after the first Administration of the Lord's Supper, our Saviour when he had told Peter of Satan's Design upon him, added this comfortable Word, Luk. 22.32. I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not; and that's it which we must pray for, that this Faith, which we think is so strong in the Day of its Advantage, may not prove weak in the Day of its Trial. For as they who would have the Benefit of the Spirit's Operation, must strive for themselves, so they that would have the Benefit of the Son's Interceision, must pray for themselves.

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nance with a charitable Disposition. Anciently the Christians had their 'Arimal, their Love-Feasts, or Feasts of Charity, annex'd to the Eucharist; but what needed that, while the Eucharist is it self a Love-Feast, and a Feast of Charity? And surely that Heart must be strangely hardned and sowr'd, that can go from under the softhing sweetning Powers of this Ordinance in an uncharitable Frame.

The Fervent Charity which now we should have among our selves, must be a loving, giving, and forgiving Charity. Thus it must have its perfect Work.

1. We must come from this Ordinance with a Disposition to love our Fellow Christians. Here we see how dear they were to Christ, for he purchased them with his own Blood, and from thence we may infer, how dear they ought to be to us, and how near they should lie to our Hearts. Shall I look strangely upon them that have acquaintance

quaintance with Christ? or be indifferent towards them that he was so much concern'd for? No. We that are many being one Bread and one Body, and having been all made to drink into one Spirit, my Heart shall be more closely knit than ever, to all the Members of that one Body, who are quicken'd and acted by that one Spirit. I have here beheld the Beauty of the Lord, and therefore must love his Image wherever I see it on his fanctified ones. I have here join'd my felf to the Lord in an Everlasting Covenant, and thereby have join'd my self in Relation, and consequently in Affection to all those who are in the Bond of the fame Covenant. I have here bound my felf to keep Christ's Commandments, and this is his Commandment, that we love one another; and that Brotherly Love continue.

Those from whom we differ in the less weighty matters of the Law, tho' we agree in the great things of God we should now think of with particular Thoughts of Love and Kindness, because from them our Minds are most in temptation to be alienated: And those to whom we have given the Right-hand of Fellowship in this and in other Ordinances, we should likewise be mindful of with particular Endearments, because of the particular Relation we stand in to them, as our more intimate Companions in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ. Yea, after such an Ordinance as this our Catholick Charity must be more warm and affectionate, more active, strong and stedfast, and more victorious over the Difficulties and Oppositions it meers with; and as the Apostle speaks (1 Thef. 3. 12.) we should increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men; and in all the Fruits and Instances of that Love. 2. Wc

2. We must come from this Ordinance with a Disposition to give to the poor and necessitous, according as our Ability and Opportunity is. the laudable Custom of the Churches of Christ, to. close the Administration of this Ordinance with a Collection for the Poor; to which we ought to contribute our share not grudgingly, or of necessity, but with a fingle Eye, and a willing mind, that our Alms may be fanctified, and accepted of God; and not only to this, but to all other Acts of Charity, we must be more forward and free after a Tho' our Saviour liv'd upon Alms Sacrament. himself, yet out of the little he had he gave Alms to the Poor, particularly at the Feast of the Passover, (John 13.29.) to set us an Example. Days of Rejoycing and Thanksgiving (and such our Sacrament Days are) us'd to be thus folemniz'd; for when we eat the Fat, and drink the speet our selves, we must send Portions unto them for whom nothing is prepar'd, Neb. 8. 10. that when our Souls are bleffing God, the Loins of the Poor may bless us. If our Hearts have here been open'd to Christ, we must evidence that they are so by our being open-handed to poor Christians; for fince our goodness cannot extend to bim, it is his Will that it should extend to them, Pfal. 16. 2, 3. If we have here in fincerity given our selves to God, we have with our selves devoted all we have to his Service and Honour, to be employ'd and laid out for him, and thus we must testify that we have heartily consented to that Branch of the Surrender. As we have opportunity, we must do good to all Men, especially to them that are of the Houshold of Faith; remembring that we are but Stewards of the manifold Grace of God. If our Prayers have here come up for a memorial before God, as Cornelius's, our Alms:

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like his must accompany them, Ast. 10. 4. We have seen here how much we owe to God's Pity and Bounty towards us; having therefore obtained Mercy, we ought to shew Mercy; knowing the Grace of the Lord Jesus, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we thro his Poverty might be rich, 2 Cor. 8.9. Read Isa. 58. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

3. We must come from this Ordinance with a Disposition to forgive those that have been provoking and injurious to us. Our Approach to the Sacrament made it necessary for us to forgive; but our Attendance on it should make it even natural to us to forgive, and our Experience there of God's Mercy and Grace to us should conquer all the Dissiculty and Reluctancy which we are conscious to our selves of therein, and make it as easy to forgive our Enemies, as it is to forgive our selves, when at any time we happen to have had a quarrel with our selves.

That which makes it hard to forgive, and puts an Edge upon our Resentments, is the Magnifying of the Affronts we have receiv'd, and the Losses we have sustain'd: Now in this Ordinance we have had Honours put upon us sufficient to balance all those Affronts, and Benefits bestow'd on us sufficient to countervail all those Losses, so that we may well afford to forgive, and forget both. With our selves we have offer'd up to God our Names, Estates, and allour Interests; in compliance therefore with the Will of God (that God who bid Shimei curse David, and who took away from 30b that which the Sabeans and Caldeans robb'd him of) we must not only bear with patience the Damage we sustain in those Concerns, but must

be charitably affected towards those that have been the Instruments of that damage; knowing that Men are God's Hand, (Pfal. 17.14.) and to his Hand

we must always submit.

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But the great Argument for the forgiving of Injuries, when we come from the Table of the Lord, is taken from the Pardons God hath in Christ The Jubilec Trumpet which there feal'd to us. proclaim'd Releases sounded at the close of the Atonement: Is God reconcil'd to us? Let us then be more firmly than ever reconcil'd to our Brethren. Let the Death of Christ which we have here commemorated, not only flay all Enmities, but take down all Partition Walls, not only forbid Revenge, but remove. Strangeness: And let all our Feuds and Quarrels be buried in his Grave. Hath our Master forgiven us that great Debt (and a very great Debt it was) and ought not we then to have compassion on our fellow-servants? Mat. 18. 32, 33. Let us therefore, who have in this Ordinance put on the Lord Jesus Christ, put on as becomes the Elect of God, boly and beloved, Bowels of Mercies and Kindness inclining us to forgive; Humbleness of Mind and Meekness, enabling us to conquer that Pride and Passion which object against our forgiving, that if any Man have a Quarrel against any, it may be pass'd by, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us, Col. 3. 12, 13.

longing for Heaven. Every good Christian lives in the Belief of the Life Everlasting, which God that cannot ly hath promised, looking for that blessed Hope: And doubtless much of the Power of Godliness consists in the joyful Expectation of the Glory to be revealed. But the we should look upon our selves as Heathens, if we did not believe it, and as

desperate if we had not some Hopes of it, yet we have all reason to lament it, as not only our Infelicity, but our Iniquity, that our Desires towards it are so weak and feeble. We are too apt to take up our rest here, and wish we might live always on this Earth, and we need something to make us bunger and thirst after that perfect righteousness, that Crown of Righteousness, with which only we shall be filled. For this good end the Lord's Supper is very improveable, to hasten us towards the Land of Promise, and carry out our Souls in earnest Breathings after the Felicities of our future State:

1. The Complaints we find cause to exhibit at this Ordinance, should make us long for Heaven; for whatever is defective and uneasy here, we shall be for ever freed from when we come to Heaven. When here we fet our felves to contemplate the Beauty of God, and the Love of Christ, we find our felves in a Cloud, we fee but through a Glass darkly; Let us therefore long to be there where the Veil shall be rent, the Glasses we now make use of laid aside, and we shall not only see Face to Face, but (which will yield us more Satisfaction) we shall see how we are seen, and know how we are known. When here we would foar upwards upon the Wings of Love, we find our felves clog'd and pinion'd, this immortal Spirit is caged in a House of Clay, and doth but flutter at the best: Let us therefore long to be there where we shall be perfeetly deliver'd from all the Encumbrances of a Body of Flein, and all the Entanglements of a World of Sense, and Love in its highest Elevations, and utmost Enlargements, shall furvive both Frith and Hope. When here we would fix for God, and join our felves closely to him, we find

Due Return from the Lord's Supper. 262 our selves apt to wander, apt to waver, and should therefore long to be there, where our Love to God will be no longer Love in Motion, constant Motion, as it is here, but Love at Rest, in everlasting Rest. Here we complain that when we would do good, evil (one evil or other) is still present with us; but there we shall for ever do good, and all Evil shall be for ever distant from us. Here we complain, that thro' the Infirmity of the Flesh we are soon weary of well-doing, and if the Spirit be willing, yet the Flesh is weak, and cannot keep pace with it: But there we shall run and not be weary. we shall walk and not faint; and shall not rest. because we shall not need to rest day or night from praising God. O, when shall I come to that World, where there is neither, Sin, nor Sorrow, nor Snare, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect there, who are as the Angels of God in Heaven.

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2. The Comforts which through Grace we experience in this Ordinance, should make us long for Heaven. The Foretasts of those Divine Joys should whet our Appetites after the full Fruition of The Bunch of Grapes that meets us in this Wilderness should make us long to be in Canaan, that Land of overflowing Plenty, where we shall wash our Garments in this Wine, and our Cloaths in this Blood of the Grape, Gen. 49. 11. Rev. 7. 14. If Communion with God in Grace here afford us fuch a Satisfaction as far furpaffeth all the Delights of the Sons of Men, what will the Fulness of Joy be in God's Presence, and those Pleasures for evermore? If the Shadows of good things to come be so refreshing, what will the Substance be, and the good things themselves? If God's Tabernacles be 10 amiable, what will his Temple be? If a Day in his Courts, an Hour at his Table be so pleasant,

what then will an Eternity within the Veil be? If I find my felf so enrich'd with the Earnest of the purchased Possession, what then will the Possession it self be? If the Jey of my Lord, as I am here capable of receiving it, and as it is mix'd with so much allay in this imperfect State, be so comfortable, what will it be when I shall enter into that Joy, and bath my self eternally in the Spring-head of these Rivers of Pleasure.

Pant then, my Soul, pant after those Fountains of Living-water, out of which all these sweet Streams arise, that boundless bottomless Ocean of Delights, into which they all run. Rest not content with any of the Contentments here below, no, not with those in Holy Ordinances (which are of all other the best we meet with in this Wilderness) but long for the Enjoyments above in the Vision of God. It is good to be here, but it is better to be there, far better to depart, and to be with Christ. While thou art groaning under the Burthens of this present State, groan after the glorious Liberties of the Children of God in the future State. Thirst for God, for the Living God; O when Shall I come and appear before God? That the Day may break, and the Shadows flee away, Make hast my beloved, and be theu like to a Roe, or to a young Hart, upon the Mountains of Spices.

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CHAP. XIII. 7-1160

An Exhortation to order the Conversation aright after the Ordinance.

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WE will now suppose the New Moon to be gone, the Sabbath to be past, and the Solemnities of the Sacrament Day to be over; and is our work now done? No, now the most needful and difficult part of our work begins; which is, to maintain such a constant Watch over our selves, as that we may in the whole Course of our Conversation exemplify the blessed Fruits and Effects of our Communion with God in this Ordinance. When we come down from this Mount, we must as Moses did, bring the Tables of the Testimony with us in our Hands, that we may in all things have respect to God's Commandments, and frame our Lives according to them. Then we truly get good by this Ordinance, when we are made better by it. and use it daily as a Bridle of Restraint to keep us in from all manner of Sin, and a Spur of Constraint to put us on to all manner of Duty.

I shall endeavour 1st to give some general Rules for the right ordering of the Conversation after we have been at the Lord's Supper; and then 2ly I shall instance in some particulars wherein we must study to conform our selves to the Intentions of that Ordinance, and abide under the Instuence of it.

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For the ift, The Lord's Supper was instituted. not only for the Solemnizing of the Memorial Christ's Death at certain times, but for the preferving of the Remembrance of it in our Minds at all times, as a powerful Argument against every thing that is ill, and a prevailing Inducement to every thing that is good : In this Sense we must bear about with us continually the dying of the Lord Fesus. So as that the Life also of Fesus may be manifested in our mortal Bodies, 2 Cor. 4. 10. 'Twas infittuted not only for the sealing of the Covenant. that it may be ratified, but for the imprinting of it upon our Minds, that we may be ever mindful of the Covenant, and live under the commanding Power of it.

We must see to it, that there be an Agreement between our Performances at the Lord's Table, and at other times; that we be uniform in our Religion, and not guilty of a Self-contradiction. What will it profit us if we pull down with one Hand what we build up with 'tother? and undo in our Lives what we have done in our Devotions? That we may not do so, let us be rul'd by these Rules.

First, Our Conversation must be such as that we may adorn the Profession which in the Lord's Supper we have made. We have in that Ordinance solemnly own'd our selves the Disciples and Followers of the Lord Jesus; we have done our selves the Honour to subscribe our selves his humble Servants, and he hath done us the Honour to admit us into his Family, and now we are concern'd to walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are call'd that our Relation to Christ being so much an Honour to us, we may never be a Dishonour to it.

We are said to be taken into Covenant with God for this very end, that we may be unto him for a Name, and for a Praise, and for a Glory, Fer. 13.11. that we may be Witnesses for him, and for the

Honour of his Name among Men.

We must therefore be very cautious that we never fay or do any thing to the Reproach of the Gospel, and Christ's Holy Religion, or which may give any Occasion to the Enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. If those that profess to be devout towards God, be unjust and dishonest towards Men. this casts Reproach upon Devotion, as if that would confift with, and countenance immorality. If those that call themselves Christians walk as other Genriles walk, and do Satan's Drudgery in Christ's Livery, Christianity suffers by it, and Religion is wounded in the House of ber Friends : Injuries are done it, which cannot be repair'd; and those will have a great deal to answer for another day, for whose fakes the Name of God and his Doctrine are thus evil spoken of. By our coming to the Lord's Supper we distinguish our selves from those whose Profession of Christianity by their being baptiz'd in Infancy, feems to be more their Chance than their Choice, and by a voluntary Act of our own we surname our selves by the Name of Israel: Now if after we have thus distinguish'd our selves, and so rais'd the Expectations of our Neighbours from us, we do that which is unbecoming the Character we wear, if we be vain, and carnal, and intemperate, if we be false and unfair, cruel and unmerciful, What will the Egyptians say? They will say, Commend us to the Children of this World, if these be the Children of God, for what do they more than others? Mens Prejudices against Religion are hereby confirmed, Advantage is given to Satan's Devices, and the Generation of the Righteous is condemn'd for the lake of those who are Spots in their N 2 Fea ts

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Feasts of Charity. Let us therefore always be jealous for the Reputation of our Profession, and afraid of doing that which may in the least be a blemish to it; and the greater Profession we make, the more tender let us be of it, because we have the more Eyes upon us that watch for our halting; When we do good, we must remember the Apostle's Caution, Let not your good be evil spoken of,

Rom. 14. 16.

We must also be very studious to do that which will redound to the Credit of our Profession: 'Tis not enough that we be not a scandal to Religion. but we must strive to be an Ornament to it, by excelling in virtue, and being forward to every good Work. Our Light must shine, as the Face of Moles did, when he came down from the Mount : that is, our good Works must be fuch, as that they who fee them, may give Religion their good Word. and thereby glorify our Father which is in Heaven, Mat. 5. 16. Our Conversation must be as becomes the Gospel of Fesus Christ, that they who will not be won by the Word, may be won by it, to fay, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you. If there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise more amiable and lovely than other, let us think on those things, Phil. 4. 8. Are we Children? let us walk as obedient Children, well taught, and well manag'd. Are we Souldiers? let us approve our selves good Souldiers, well train'd, and well disciplin'd, so we shall do honour to him that hath called us. If God's Ifrael carefully keep and do his Statutes, it will be faid of them to their Honour among the Nations, Surely they are a wife and understanding People, Deut. 4. 6. And this will redound to the Honour of Christ, for thus, Wisdom is justified of her Children.

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Secondly, Our Conversation must be such as that we may fulfil the Engagements which at the Lord's Supper we have laid our selves under. Having at God's Altar sworn that we will keep his righteous Judgments, we must conscientiously perform it in all the Instances of a holy, righteous, and sober Conversation. The Vows we have made express or implicit, must be carefully made good, by a constant watchfulness against all Sin, and a constant diligence in all Duty, beaause, better it is not to Vow, than to Vow and not to pay, Eccl. 5.4, 5.

When we are at any time tempted to Sin, or in danger of being furpriz'd into any ill thing, let this be our Reply to the Tempter, and with this let us quench his fiery Darts, Thy Vows are upon me O God. Did I not fay, I will take beed to my ways that I Sin not with my Tongue : I did fay fo, and therefore I will keep my Mouth as with a Bridle, Pfal. 39. 1. Did I not make a Covenant with mine Eyes? I did, that therefore shall be to me a covering of the Eyes, that they may never be either the Inlets or the Outlets of Sin. Did I not say, I will not transgress, (Fer. 2. 20.) I did say so, and therefore by the Grace of God, I will abstain from all Appearance of Evil, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness. An honest Man is as good as his Word.

When we begin to grow flothful and careless in our Duty, backward to it, and slightly in it, let this stir up the Gift that is in us, and quicken us to every good Word and Work. O my Soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord, thou hast said it with the Blood of Christ in thy Hand: He is thy Lord then, and worship thou him, Psal. 16. 2. —45.11. When a Lion in the way, a Lion in the Streets, deters us from any Duty, and we cannot plow by reason of cold, not sow or reap for fear of N 3

Winds and Clouds, let this help us over the Difficulty with a steddy Resolution: 'Tis what I have promis'd, and I must perform it; I will not, I dare not be false to my God, and my Covenants with him; I have open'd my Mouth unto the Lord, and without incurring the Guilt of Perjury, I cannot go back. ha

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Thirdly, Our Conversation must be such, as that we may make fome grateful Returns for the Favours which we have here received. The Law of Gratitude is one of the Laws of Nature; for the Ox knows his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib, and some have thought, that all our Gospel Duty may very fitly be comprized in that of Gratude to our Redeemer. In the Lord's Supper we (es what Christ hath done for us, and we receive what he bestows on us, and in consideration of both, we must set our selves not only to love and praise him, but to walk before him in the Land of the Living, that though we cannot return him any Equivolent for his Kindness, yet by complying with his Will, and consulting his Honour, we may thew that we bear a grateful Mind, and would render again according to the Benefit done unto us.

By wilful Sin after a Sacrament, we load our felves with the Guilt not only of Treachery, but of base Ingratitude. It was a great Aggravation of Solomon's Apostacy, that he turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appear'd unto him twice, 1 Kin. 11. 9. More than twice, yea, many a time God hath appear'd not only for us in his Providences, but to us in his Ordinances, manifesting himself in a distinguishing way, to us and not unto the World: Now if we carry our selves strangely to him who hath been such a Friend to us, if we affront him who hath so favour'd us, and rebel against him who hath

hath not only spar'd but ransom'd us, we deserve to be stigmatized with a Mark of Everlasting Infamy, as the most ungrateful Wretches that ever God's Earth bore, or his Sun shone upon. Foolish People and unwise we are, thus to require the Lord. Let us therefore reason thus with our selves, when at any time we are tempted to Sin. After he hath given us such a Deliverance as this, shall we again break his Commandments? Shall we spit in the Face and spurn at the Bowels of such loving Kindness? after we have eaten Bread with Christ, shall we go and lift up the Heel against him? No, God sorbid, we will not continue in Sin after Grace has thus abounded, Rom. 6. 1, 2.

By an exact and exemplary Conversation, we shew our selves sensible of the mighty Obligations we ly under to love him and live to him, who loved us, and dy'd for us: We should therefore from a Principle of Gratitude, always abound in the Work of the Lord, and lay out our selves with Zeal and Chearfulness in his Service; thinking nothing too much to do, too hard to suffer, or too dear to part with for him that hath done, and suffer'd, and parted with so much for us. Let the Love of Christ

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Fourthly, Our Conversation must be such as that we may preserve the Comforts which in the Lord's Supper we have tasted. Have we been satisfied with the Goodness of God's House? Let us not receive the Grace of God therein in vain, by the Forseiture or Neglect of those Satisfactions. Fear the Lord and his Goodness, Hos. 3.5. that is, fear lest you Sin against that Goodness, and so Sin it away. Have we receiv'd Christ Jesus the Lord? Let us hold saft what we have receiv'd, that no Man take our Crown, and the Comfort of it. Hath God here spoken Peace to us? let us then never return to folly,

folly, lest we break in upon the Peace that God hath spoken: 'Tis a Jewel too precious to be pawn'd, as it is by the Covetous for the Wealth of this World, and by the Voluptuous for the Pleasures of the Flesh. Have we tasted that the Lord is gracious? Let us not put our Mouths out of taste to those Spiritual and Divine Pleasures, by any carnal Delights or Gratifications. Hath God made us to hear Joy and Gladnes? Let us not set our selves out of the hearing of that joyful Sound, by listning to the Voice of Satan's Charms, charm he never so wisely.

If we walk loosly and carelesly after a Sacrament, we provoke God to hide his Face from us, to take from us the Cup of Consolation, and to put into our Hands instead of it, the Cup of Trembling; we cloud our Evidences, shake our Hopes, and wither our Comforts, and undo what we have been doing at this Ordinance. That Caution therefore which the Apostle gives to the Elect Lady and her Children, should be ever sounding in our Ears. 2 John 8. Look to your selves, that we lose not the thing which we have wrought: Or, as the Margin reads it, the things which we have gained. Let us not by our own Folly and Neglect, let slip the Benefit of what we have done, and what we have got at the Table of the Lord.

Especially we should take heed lest Satan get an advantage against us, and improve that to our Prejudice, which we do not take due Care to improve as we ought, to our Benesit. After the Sop, Satan enter'd into Judas, John 13.27. If the Comforts which we think we have received in this Ordinance do not make us more watchful, 'tis well if they do not make us more secure. If they be not a Savour of Life unto Life, by deterring us from Sin, there is danger lest they prove a Savour of Death unto Death, by hardning us in Sin. 'Twas one of the

Conversation after the Lord's Supper. 273 the most impudent words which that adulterous Woman spoke (and she spoke a great many) when the allur'd the Young Man into her Snares, Prov. 7. 14, 15. I have Peace-Offerings with me, this day have I paid my Vows, therefore came I forth to meet thee. I have confess'd, and been absolv'd, and therefore can the better afford to begin upon a new Score: I know the worst of it, 'tis but being confess'd and absolv'd again. But shall we continue in Sin, because Grace bath abounded, and that Grace may abound? God forbid: Far be it, far be it from us ever to entertain such a Thought. Shall we fuck Poison out of the Balm of Gilead? and split our Souls upon the Rock of Salvation? Is Christ the Minister of Sin? Shall the Artifices of our Spiritual Enemies turn this Table into a Snare, and that on it, which should be for our Welfare into a Trap. Those are but pretended Comforts in Christ thatare thus made real Supports in Sin. Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Hell will be Hell indeed to those who thus trample under Foot the Bload of the Covenant, as an unholy thing, and do despite to the Their Case is desperate indeed, Spirit of Grace. that are embolden'd in Sin by their Approaches to God.

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Fifthly, Our Conversation must be such, as that we may evidence the Communion we have had with God in Christ at the Lord's Table. It is not enough to say, that we have Fellowship with him; the vilest Hypocrites pretend to that Honour, but by walking in Darkness, they disprowheir Pretensions, and give themselves the Ly. I John. 1. 6. We must therefore show that we have fellowship with him, by walking in the Light, ver. 7. and as he also walked, I John 2. 6. By keeping up communion with God in Providences, having our Eyes ever towards him, and acknowledging him in all our

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ways,

ways, receiving all our Comforts as the Gifts of his Bounty, and bearing all our Afflictions as his Fatherly Chastifements, we evidence that we have had Communion with him in Ordinances. that converse much with Scholars, evidence it by the Torque of the Learned; as one may likewife difcover by the Politeness and Refinedness of a Man's Air and Mien, that his Conversation hath layn much with Persons of Quality: Thus they that have Communion with the Holy God, should make it to appear in all Holy Conversation; not fuffering any corrupt Communication to proceed out of their Mouth, but abounding in that which is good, and to the use of Edifying, that by our Speech and Behaviour it may appear what Country we belong to.

When Peter and John quitted themselves before the Council with such a Degree of Conduct and Assurance as one could not have expected from unlearned and ignorant Men, not acquainted with Courts, or Camps, or Academies, it is said, that they who marvelled at it, took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus, Ad. 4. 13. And from those who had been with Jesus, who had followed him, setten at his Feet, and eaten Bread with him, very great things might be expected. In this Ordinance we have been with Jesus, we have been seeing his Beauty, and tasting his Sweetness, and now we should live so, as that all who converse with us, may discern it, and by our Holy Heavenly Converse may take knowledge of us, that we have

Leen with Telw.

For the 2d thing propos'd. Let us instance in some Particulars wherein we ought in a special manner to approve our selves well after this Solemnity, that as we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, we may so malk in him, Col. 2, 6.

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After we have been admitted in Communion with God, and have renew'd our Covenants with him at his Table, it behoves us to be careful in these fix things.

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I. We must see to it that we be sincerely Deveutand Pieus, 'Tis not enough that we live foberly and righteoully, but we must live godly in this present World, and our Sacramental Engagements should fir us up to abound therein more and more. After an Interview with our Friends by which mutual Acquaintance is improv'd, and mutual Affections confirm'd, we are more constant and endearing in our Correspondence with each other, so we should be with God after this Ordinance; more frequent in Holy Ejaculations, and Breathings of Soul towards God, intermix'd even with common Bufiness and Conversation; more abundant in Reading, Meditation, and folemn Prayer; more diligent in our Attendance on publick Ordinances; more fix'd and enlarg'd in Closet-Devotions, and more lively and affectionate in our Family-worthin. Those Religious Exercises wherein we have formerly been remiss and careless, easily perswaded. to put them by, or put them off, we should now be more constant to, and more careful in; more close in our Application to them, and more serious in our Performance of them.

If we have indeed found that it is good for us to draw near to God, we will endeavour to keep near him, so near him, as upon every occasion to speak to him, and to hear from him. If this Sacrament have been our Delight, the Word will be our Delight, and we will daily converse with it; Prayers will be our Delight, and we will give our selves to a t, and continue instant in it. They that have been a feasted upon the Sacrifice of Atonement, ought to abound?

abound in Sacrifices of Acknowledgment, the Spiritual Sacrifices of Prayer and Praise, and a broken Heart, which are acceptable to God through Christ Jesus: And having in our Flock a Male, we must

offer that, and not a corrupt thing.

It is the shame of many who are called Christians, and have a Name and a Place in God's Family, that they are as backward and indifferent to Holy Duties, as if they were afraid of doing too much for God and their own Souls, and as if their chief care were to know just how much will serve to bring them to Heaven, that they may do no more. They can be content to go a Mile, but they are not willing to go twain. And doth it become those on whom God hath fown fo plentifully, to make their Returns so sparingly? Ought we not rather to enquire what free-will Offerings we may bring to God's Alrar? and how we may do more in Religion than we have us'd to do? They that have found what a good Table God keeps, and how welcome they have been to it, should defire to dwell in his House all the Days of their Life, and bleffed are they that do fo, they will be still praising bim, Pfal. 27. 4. --- 84. 4.

2. We must see to it that we be conscientiously just and honest. We not only contradict our Profession, and give our selves the Lie, but we reproach the Religion we profess, and give it the Lie, if after we have been at this Sacrament, we deceive or defraud our Brother in any matter; for this is that which the Lord our God requires of us, that we do justly, i. e: that we never do wrong to any, in their Body, Goods, or good Name, and that we ever study to render to all their due, according to the Relation we stand in, and the Obligation we ly under to them. That therefore which is altogether just, (justice, justice, as the Word is) shalt thou follow.

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follow, Deut. 16. 20. There are many who make no great Pretentions to Religion, and yet Natural Conscience, Sense of Honour, and a Regard to the common Good, keep them strictly just in all their Dealings, and they would fcorn to do a base and dishonest thing: And shall not the Bonds of this Ordinance added to those Inducements, restrain us from every thing that hath but the Appearance of Fraud and Injustice? A Christian? a Communicant? and yet a Cheat? yet a Man not to be trusted, not to be dealt with, but standing on ones guard? How can those be reconcil'd? Will that Man be true to his God whom he hath not feen, that is false to his Brother whom he hath seen? shall he be intrusted with the true Riches that is not faithful in the unrighteous Mammon ? Luke 16. 11.

Let the Remembrance of our Sacramental-Vows. be always fresh in our Minds, to give check to those secret Covetings, which are the Springs of all fraudulent Practifes. I have disclaim'd the World for a Portion, shall I then for the Compassing of a little of it's forbidden Gain, wrong my Brother whom I ought to do good to, wrong my Profession which I ought to adorn, and wrong my own Conscience which I ought to keep void of offence? God forbid. I have likewise renounced the hidden things of Dishonesty, and promiss'd not to walk in Craftiness. By the Grace of God I will therefore ever have my Conversation in the World, in Simplicity, and Godly Sincerity, not with Fielbly Wildom, 2 Cor. 1.12. --- 4. 2. They that are so well skill'd in the Arts of Deceit. as to fave themselves from the Scandal of it, and to be able to fay with Ephraim, tho' he had the Balances of Deceit in his Hand, In all my Labours they Shall find no Iniquity in me that were Sin, Hof. 12. 7, 8. Yet cannot thereby fave themselves from the Guilt of it, and the Ruin that attends it, for doubtless the Lord is the Avenger of all such,

1 Thes. 4.6. Those that cheat their Neighbours cannot cheat their God, but will prove in the End to have cheated themselves into Everlasting Misery, and what is a Man profited if he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?

3. We must see to it that we be religiously meek and peaceable. We must not only come from this. Ordinance in a calm and quiet Frame, but we must always keep our felves in fuch a Frame. By the Meekness and Gentleness of Christ (which the Apostle mentions as a most powerful Charm, 2 Cor. 10. 1.) let us be wrought upon to be always meek and gentle, as those that have learn'd of him. The Storms of Passion that are here laid, must never be suffer'd to make Head again, nor must the Enmities that are here flain, ever be reviv'd. Having eaten of this Gospel-Passover, we must all our Life long keep the Feast without the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness, 1 Cor. 5. 8. Having been feasted at Wisdom's Table, we must always abide under the Conduct and Influence of that Wisdom which is first pure, and then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, Jam. 3. 17. God was greatly displeas'd with those, that after they had releas'd their Bond-Servants, according to the Law, recall'd their Releases, and brought them into subjection again, Fer. 34. 11, 17. And so will he be with those who seem to set aside their Quarrels when they come to the Sacrament, but as foon as the Pang of their Devotion is over, the Heat of their Pasion returns, and they resume their Quarrels, and revive all their Angry Resentments; thereby making it to appear that they did never truly forgive, and therefore never were forgiven of God. Eactum non dicitur quod non perseverat.

Let those that have had Communion with God in this Ordinance be able to appeal to their Relations and Domesticks, and all they converse with. concerning this; and to youch them for Witnesses. that they have mafter'd their Passions, and are grown more mild and quiet in their Families than fometimes they have been, and that even when they are most provok'd, they know both how to hear Reason, and how to speak it. Whatever others do, let us never give Occasion to the Enemies of the Lord to say, that the Seriousness of Religion makes Men fowre and morose, and that Zeal in Devotion disposeth the Mind to Peevishness and Passion: But let us evidence the contrary, That the Grace of God doth indeed make Men good-natur'd, and that the Pleasures of serious Godliness make Men truly chearful and easy to all about them. Having been here sealed to the Day of Redemption, let us not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, that Bleffed Dove; and that we may not, let all Bitterness, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-Speaking be put away from us, with all Malice, as it follows there, Eph. 4. 30, 31.

4. We must see to it that we be strictly sober and chast. Gluttony, and Drunkenness, and Fleshly Lusts are as great a Reproach as can be to those that profess Relation to Christ, and the Expectation of Eternal Life. It becomes those that have been feasted at the Table of the Lord, and have there tasted the Pleasures of the Spiritual and Divine Life to be dead to all the Delights of Sense, and to make it appear that they are so by a Holy Indifferency to them. Let not the Flesh be indulged to the Prejudice of the Spirit, nor Provision made for the sulfilling of the Lusts thereof. Have we been entertained with the Dainties of Heaven? let us not be desirous of the Dainties of Sense, nor

follicitous to have the Appetite gratified, and all our Enjoyments to the highest degree pleasing. When our Lord had instituted his Supper, and given this Cup of Bleffing to his Disciples, he added. Mat. 26. 29. I will not drink benceforth of this Fruit of the Vine: Now welcome the bitter Cup. the Vinegar, and the Gall: Teaching us, after a Sacrament to fit more loose than before to bodily Delights, and to be better reconcil'd to Hardships and Disappointments in them. It was the Sin and Shame of the Israelites in the Wilderness, that while they were fed with Manna, Angels Food, they lusted, faying, Wwo will give us Flish to ent: And they Sin after the Similitude of that Transgression, who when they have eaten of the Bread of Life, and drunk of the Water of Life, yet continue to be as curious and careful about their Mean and Drink, as if they knew no better things, and had their Happiness bound up in them; as if the Kingdom of God were in this Sense Meat and Drink. and a Turkish Paradice were their Heaven: Surely they that are of this Spirit ferve not our Lord Christ. but their own Bellies.

But if they thus shame themselves who indulge the Flesh, tho' their Reason remaineth with them. what shall we think of those who by their Intemperance put themselves quite out of the Possession of their own Souls, disfit themselves for the Service of God, and level themselves with the Beasts? A Christian, a Communicant! and yet a Tipler, a Drunkard, and a Companion with those that run to this Excess of Riot. This, this is the Sin that hate been the Scandal and Ruin of many, who having begun in the Spirit, have thus ended in the Field: This is that which hath quenched the Spirit, hardned the Heart, befoked the Head, debauch'd the Conscience, wither'd the Profession, and so hath slain its thousands, and its ten thousands. Against

Conversation after the Lord's Supper. 281 Against this Sin therefore the Lord's Prophets must cry aloud, and not spare: Of the Danger of this the Watchmen are concern'd to give warning: And dare those who partake of the Cup of the Lord, drink of the Cup of Devils; I Cor. 10. 21. Can there be so much Concord between Light and Darkness, between Christ and Belial? No, there cannot, these are contrary the one to the other. If Mens Communicating will not break them off from their Drunkenness, their Drunkenness must break them off from Communicating; for these are Spots in our Feasts of Charity, and if God be true. Drunkards shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Let me therefore with all earnestness, as one that desires to obtain Mercy of the Lord, to be faithful, warn all that profess Religion and Relation to Christ, to stand upon their Guard against this Snare, which hath been fatal to multitudes. As you tender the Favour of God, the Comforts of the Spirit, the Credit of your Profession, and the Welfare of your own Souls here and hereafter, take heed of being entangled in any Temptations to this Sin. Shun the Society of those Evil Doers: Abstain from all the Appearances of this Sin: Watch and be sober: He that loved us, and washed us from our Sins in bis own Blood, hath made us unto our God Kings and Priests, Rev. 1. 5, 6. Are we Priests? This was the Law of the Priesthood, and it was a Law made upon occasion of the Death of Nadab and Abibu, who probably had erred through Wine, Lev. 10. 9. Do not drink Wine nor strong Drink when ye go into the Tabernacle of the Congregation. Are we Kings? It is not for Kings, O Lemuel, it is not for Kings to drink Wine --- lest they drink and forget the Law, Prov. 31.4, 5. It is not for Christians to drink to excess, and to allow themselves in those Riotings and Revellings, which even the fober Heathen

condemn'd and abhorr'd.

Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, and Lascivioufness, are likewise Lufts of the Flesh, and defiling to the Soul, which therefore all those must carefully avoid that profess to be led by the Spirit; they are abominable things, which the Lord hates, and which we also must hate. Are not our Bodies Temples of the Holy Ghost? Dare we then defile them? Are they not Members of Christ? and shall we make them the Members of a Harlot? Let those that eat of the Holy things, be Holy both in Body and Spirit, and possess their Vessel in Sanctification and Honour, and not in the Lusts of Uncleanness. Let those Eyes never be guilty of a wanton look that have here seen Christ evidently set forth crucified among us: Let no lewd corrupt Communication proceed out of that Mouth into which God's Covenant hath been taken: Let no unclean lascivious Thoughts be ever harbour'd in that Heart which the Holy Jesus vouchsafes to dwell in. Let those that have exten of Wisdom's Bread, and drunk of the that the bath mingled, never hearken to the Invitations of the foolish Woman, who courts the unwary to stolen Waters, and Bread eaten in fecret, under pretence that they are sweet and plea-Sant; for the dead are there, and the guests are in the depths of Hell, Prov. 9. 17, 18.

ritable and beneficent. It is not enough that we do no hurt, but if we would order our Conversation aright, we must, as we have Opportunity, do good to all Men, as becomes those to whom God in Christ is good, and doth good, and who profess themselves the Disciples and Followers of him who went about doing good. Shall we be selfish, and seek our own things only, who have here seen how Christ bumbled and emptied himself for us? Shall we be sparing of our Pains for our Brethren's good, who have

Conversation after the Lord's Supper. 283 have here feen Christ among us, as one that ferveth, as one that fuffereth, and as one who came not to be minister'd unto, but to minister, and to give his Life a Ranfom for many? Shall we be thy of speaking to, or speaking for our poor Brethren, who have here feen our Lord Jesus not asham'd to own us, and intercede for us, notwithstanding our Poverty and Meanness? Shall we be strait-handed in distributing to the Necessities of the Saints, who have here found Christ so liberal and open-handed in imparting to us not only the Gospel of God, but even his own Soul. After we have been at this Ordinance, we should shew how much we are affected withour . receivings there, by being very ready and forward to every good Work; because our goodness extendeth not to God, it ought to extend to the Saints that are in the Earth, Pfal. 16. 2, 3. Thus we must be Followers of God as dear Children, we must walk in love, as here we see Christ bath loved us, and given himself for us, Eph. 5. 1, 2.

from this World, and more taken up with another World. A Christian then lives like himself, when he lives above the things that are seen, which are temporal, and looks upon them with a Holy Contempt; and keeps his Eye six'd upon the things that are not seen, which are Eternal, looking upon them with a Holy Concern. We are not of this World, but we are called out of it; we belong to another World, and are design'd for it; we must therefore seek the things that are above, and not set our Affections on things beneath.

The Thoughts of Christ crucified should wean us from this World, and make us out of love with it: The World knew him not, but hated him; the Princes of this World crucified him, but he over-came the World, and we also by Faith in him may

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obtain a Victory over it; such a Victory over it, as that we may not be entangled by its Snares, encumber'd with its Cares, or disquieted by its Sorrows. By frequent Meditation on the Cross of Christ, the World will be crucified to us, and we to the World, Gal. 6. 14. that is, the World and we shall grow very indifferent one to another, and no Love shall be lost between us.

The Thoughts of Christ glorified should raise our Hearts to that bleffed Place where Christ fitteth on the Right-hand of God, Col. 3. 1. and from whence we look for our Saviour, Phil. 3. 20. When we commemorate Christ's Entrance within the Veil as our Fore-runner, and have good hopes of following him shortly, when we think of his being in Paradise, and of our being with him, how should our Affections be carried out towards that Foy of our Lord! How studious should we be to do the Work of Heaven, conform to the Laws of Heaven. and converse as much as may be with the glorious Society there! Having received the Adoption of Sons, we should improve our Acquaintance with, and raife our Expectations of the Inheritance of Sons.

CHAP. XIV.

Some Words of Comfort which this Ordinance Speaks to Serious Christians.

THE Lord's Supper was intended for the Comfort of good People, not only while they are actually attending on God in it, but ever after; not only that their Foy may be full, but that this Foy may remain in them, John 15. 11. It is a Feast which was made for Laughter, not that of the Fool which determins in a Sigh, and the End of it is Heaviness, but that of the truly Wise Man, who hath learn'd to rejoice evermore, yea, to rejoice in the Lord always: Not that of the Hypocrite, whole triumphing is short, and his Joy but for a Moment (Feb 20. 5.) But that of the fincere Christian. whom God causeth always to triumph in Christ, 2 Cor. 2.14. The Water that Christ here gives is defign'd to be a Well of Water, living Water, fending forth Streams that make glad the City of our God. This Feast, if it be not our own Fault, will be to us a continual Feast, and a Brest of Consolation, from which we may daily suck and be satisfied.

be a Comforted People. The most Evangelical part of the Prophecy of Isaiah begins with this, hap. 40. 1. Comfort ye, comfort ye'my People, saith your God. He takes pleasure in their Prosperity,

286 Comforts drawn from the Lord's Supper.

he delights to see them chearful, and to hear 'em fing at their Work, and fing in his Ways. Religion was never defign'd to make People Melancholy; Wisdom's Adversaries do her wrong if they paint her in Mourning, und Wisdom's Children do not do her right if they give them occasion to do so; for tho' they are like St. Paul, as forrowful, yet they should be like him, alway rejoicing, because tho they feem perhaps to have nothing, yet really they possess all things, 2 Cor. 6. 10. So good a Master do we serve, that he hath been pleas'd to twist Interestewith us, and so to compound his Glory and our Comfort, that in feeking the one, we feek the other also. He hath made that to be our Duty, which is indeed our greatest Priviledge, and that is, to delight our selves always in the Lord, and to live a Life of complacency in him. And it is the New Testament Character of a Christian indeed, that he rejoyceth in Christ Fesus, Phil. 3.3.

2. Good Christians have of all People most reafon to rejoice, and be comforted. As for those that are at a distance from God, and out of Covenant with him, they have reason to be afflicted, and mourn and weep, Rejoice not O Israel for joy as other People, for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, Hof. 9. 1. To them that eat of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge, this Tree of Life also is forbidden: But those that devote themselves to God have all the reason in the World to delight themselves in God. They that ask the way to Sion with their Faces thitherward, though they go weeping to feek the Lord their God, (Fer. 50. 4, 5.) yet they shall go on rejoicing, when they have found him; for they cannot but find the way pleasantness, and the Paths of it Peace. Have not they reason to smile on whom God smiles? If God hath put Grace into the Heart, hath he not put Gladness there, and a New Song incomforts drawn from the Lord's Supper. 287
to the Mouth? Is Christ proclaim'd King in the
Soul? and ought it not to be done with Acclamations of Joy? Is the Atonement receiv'd, and
the true Treasure found? and shall not we rejoice
with Joy unspeakable? Have we good Hope
through Grace of entring shortly into the Joy
of our Lord, and have we not cause now to rejoice
in hope of it?

3. Yet those that have so much reason to rejoice, are often cast down, and in Sorrow, and not altogether without cause. This state of Probation and Preparation is a mixed State, and it is proper enough it should be so, for the Trial and Exercise of various Graces, and that God's Power may have the Praise of keeping the Balance even. In those whose Hearts are visited by the Day-Spring from on high, the Light is neither clear nor dark, neither Day nor Night, Zech. 14. 6, 7. They have their Comforts, which they would not exchange for the peculiar Treasure of Kings and Provinces, but withal they have their Crosses, under which they groan, being burthened. They have their Hopes, which are as an Anchor to the Soul, fure and stedfast, entring into that within the Veil; but withal they have their Fears, for their Warfare is not yet accomplish'd; they have not yet attained, neither are already perfect. They have their Joys, such as the World can neither give nor take away; Joys that a Stranger doth not intermeddle with, but withal they have their Griefs; their way to Cancan lies thro'a Wilderness, and their way to Ferusalem thro' the Vally of Bacab: Their Master was himself a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief, and they are to be his Followers. While we are here, we must not think it strange, if for a Season, when needis, we are in Heaviness; we cannot expect to reap in Joy hereafter, unless now we sow in Tears.

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288 Comforts drawn from the Lord's Supper.

We must not therefore think that either the present Happiness of the Saints, which in this World they are to expect, or their present Holiness, which in this World they are to endeavour, consists in such Delights and Joys, as leave no room for any Mourning, and sense of Trouble; no, there is a Sorrow that is a Godly Sorrow, a Jealouly of our felves, that is a Godly Fealousy: It is only a perfect Love that casts out all Fear, and all Grief, which we are not to expect in this imperfect State. All Tears shall not be wiped away from our Eyes, nor shall Sorrow and Sighing quite flee away, till we come to Heaven; while we are here, we are in a Vale of Tears, and must conform to the Temper of the Climate; we are at fea, and expect to be toffed with Tempests: we are in the Camp, and must expect to be alarm'd; while without are fightings, we marvel that within are fears.

4. Our Lord Jesus hath therefore provided such Comforts for the Relief of his People in their present forrowful State, as may serve to balance their Griefs, and keep them from being pressed above measure; and he hath instituted Holy Ordinances, and especially this of the Lord's Supper, for the Application of those Comforts to them, that they may never fear, may never Sorrow, as those that have no hope, or no joy. The Covenant of Grace, as it is minister'd in the Everlasting Gospel, hath in it a Salve for every Sore, a Remedy for every Malady; so that they who have an Interest in that Covenant, and know it, may triumph with Bleffed Paul, (2 Cor. 4. 8, 4.) Though we are troubled on every side, yet we are not distressed, perplexed sometimes, but thanks be to God, not in despair; persecuted by Men, but not forsaken of God; cast down, and drooping, but not destroy'd, and lost. This is that which bears them up under all their Burthens, comth la an h

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Comforts drawn from the Lord's Supper. 289 comforteth them in all their Griefs, and enableth them to rejoice in Tribulation. God is theirs, and they are his, and he hath made with them an Everlasting Covenant, well order d in all things, and sure, and this is all their Salvation, and all their Desire,

however it be, 2 Sam. 23. 5.

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The Word of God is written to them for this end, that their Joy may be full. I John 1-4. and that through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures, they may have hope, Rom. 15. 4. Precious Promises are there treasur'd up, to be the Foundations of their Faith and Hope, and consequently the Fountains of their Joy. Songs of Thankfgiving are there drawn up for them to refresh themselves with in their weary Pilgrimage, and to have recourse to for the filencing of their Complaints. Ministers are appointed to be the Helpers of their Joy, 2 Cor. 1.24. and to speak comfort to such as mourn in Zion. The Sabbath is the Day which the Lord hath made for this very end, that they may rejoice and be glad Prayer is appointed for the ease of troubled Spirits, that in it they may pour out their Complaints before God, and fetch in Comfort from him: Ask and ye shall receive, that your Joy may be full: This Sacrament was ordained for the Comfort of good Christians; for the Confirmation of their Faith in order to the Preservation and Increase of their Joy; and they ought to improve it both for the strengthning of the Habit of Holy Chearfulness, and their actual Encouragement against the several particular Grievances of this present Time. there is no Complaint which a good Christian hath cause to make at any time, which he may not qualify, and keep from going clamorous by Comforts drawn from what he hath feen and tafted, what he hath done and received at the Lord's Table. Let us therefore be daily drawing Water out of these Wells of Salvation, and when our Souls are

290 Comforts drawn from the Lord's Supper.

cast down and disquieted within us, let us fetch Arguments from our Communion with God in this Ordinance, both in chiding them for their Despondency, and enconraging them to hope and rejoice in God. What is it that grievos and oppresses us? Why is our Countenance sad, and why go we mourning all the day long? Whatever the Occasion of the Heaviness is, let it be weigh'd in the Balances of the Sanctuary, and I dare say, there is that comfort to be set in the Scale against it, and out-weigh it. Let us instance in some of the most common Causes of our Trouble, and try with what Relief we may from hence be furnish'd with.

First, Are we disquited and discouraged by the Remembrance of our former Sins and Provocations? There is that here which will help to quiet and incourage us in reference to this. Conscience sometimes calls to mind the Sins of the unconverted State, and charges them home upon the Soul, efpecially if they were heinous and scandalous; it repeats the Reproach of the Youth; rips up the old Quarrels and aggravates them; rakes in the old Wounds, and makes them bleed afresh; and from hence the discomfolate Soul is ready to draw such hard Conclusions as these: Surely it is impossible that so great a Sinner as I have been should be pardon'd and accepted; that such a Prodigal should be welcom'd home, and such a Publican ever find Mercy: Can I expect to share in that Grace which I folong flighted and fin'd against? or to be taken into that Covenant which I have so often cast away the Cords of? Will the Holy God take one into the Embraces of his Love that hath been lo vile and finful, and fitter to be made a Monument of his Wrath? Can there be any Hopes for me?

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or if there be some Hope, yet can there be any Joy? If I may through a Miracle of Mercy escape Hell at last, which I have deserved a thousand times, yet ought I not to weep mine Eyes out, and to go softly all my Years in the bitterness of my Soul? (Isa. 38. 15.) Ought I not to go down to the Grave Mourning? Gen. 37. 35. Should not my Soul how

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These are black and sad thoughts, and enough to fink the Spirit, if we had not met with that at the Lord's Table, which gives a sufficient Answer to all these Challenges. We have been great Sinners, but there we have seen the great Redeemer able to fave to the uttermost, all that come to God by him, and have there call'd him by that Name of his, which is as Ointment poured forth, The Lord our Righteousness. Our Sins have reached to the Heavens, but there we have feen God's Mercy in. Christ reaching beyond the Heavens. We have been wretchedly defil'd in our own ways, but there we have feen not only a Laver, but a Fountain open'd for the House of David to wash in, and have been affur'd that the Blood of Christ cleanfeth from all Sin. even that which for the heinousness of its Nature. and the multitude of its Aggravations, hath been as Sca let and Crimson, Isa. 1. 18. That Article of the Covenant, which is so expressive of a general Pardon, hath been feal'd to me upon Gospel Terms. Heb. 8. 12. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more, and this I rely upon. Great Sinners have obtained Mercy, and why may THE MENT CONTINUE IN THE

And though a humble Remembrance of Sin will be of use to us all our Days, yet such a disquieting Remembrance of it, as hinders our Faith in Christ, and our Joy in God is by no means good; even

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292 Comforts drawn from the Lord's Supper.

Sorrow for Sin may exceed due Bounds, and Penitents may be swallowed up with overmuch Sorrow, 2 Cor. 2.7. The Covenant of Grace speaks not only Pardon but Peace to all Believers, and nor only fets the broken tones, but makes them to rejoice, Pfal. 51. 8. When it faith, Thy Sins be forgiven thee, it faith alfo, Son, Daughter, be of good cheer, Mat. 9.2. It is the Duty of those that have received the Atonement, to take the Comfort of it. and to joy in God through our Lord Jefus Christ, Rom. 5. 11. Acts of Self-denial and Mortification, are Means and Evidences of our Sanctification, and fuch as we ought to abound therein, but they are not the Grounds of our Justification. 'Tis Christ's Blood that makes the Satisfaction, not our Tears. Therefore we must not so remember former Sins as to put away prefent Comforts: A Life of Repentance will very well consist with a Life of Holy Chearfulness.

Secondly. Are we disquicted and discouraged by the Sense of our Sins of daily Infirmity? There is that here which will be a Relief against this Grievance alfo. I have not only former Guilt to reflect upon, contracted in the Days of my Ignorance and Unbelief, but alas, I am still sinning, sinning daily. God knows, and my own Heart knows, that in many things I do offend. I come short of the Rule, and short of the Glory of Sod every Day. Vain Thoughts lodge within me, Idle Words proceed from me. If I would count either the one or the other, they are more in number than the Sand. When I think of the Strictness and Extent of the Divine Law, and compare my own Heart and Life with it, I find that innumerable Evils compass me about. Neglects of Duty are many, and Negligences in Duty are more. Who can tell how oft he offends? If the Righteons God thould enter into Judgment with

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with me, and be extream to mark what I do amis, I were not able to answer him for one of a thousand. It might have been expected, that when the God of Mercy had upon my Repentance forgiven the Rebellions of my sinful State, taken me into his Family, and made me as one of his hired Servants, nay, as one of his adopted Children, that I should have been a dutiful Child, and a diligent Servant. But, alas, I have been slothful and trisling, and in many Instances undutiful; I am very defective in my Duty, both to my Master, and to my Fellow-Servants, and in many things transgress daily:

For thefe things I weep, mine eye, mine eye rans down

with Tears. But there is that in this Ordinance which may keep us from finking under this Burthen, tho' we: have cause enough to complain of it: 'Tis true, I am finning daily, and it is my Sorrow and Shame that I am fo; but the Memorial of that great Sacrifice which Jesus Christ offer'd once for all upon the Cross, is therefore continually to be celebrated on Earth, because the Merit of it is continually pleaded in Heaven, where Christ ever lives to make Intercessim in the virtue of his Satisfaction: Having therefore celebrated the Memorial of it ar the Table of the Lord, here in the outer Court I ought to take the comfort of the continual Efficacy of it within the Veil, and its prevalency for the The Water out of the Benefit of all Believers. Rock, the Rock finitten, follows God's Ifrael through this Wilderness, in the precious Streams of which they that are washed are welcome to mash their Feet from the Pollations they contract in their daily walk through this defiling World; and the Best have need of this washing, John 13. 10. That needful Word of caution, That we fin not, is immediately follow'd with this Word of Comfort, But if any Man sin we have an Advocate with the Fa-

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294 Comforts drawn from the Lord's Supper.

and he hath a good Plea to put in, on our behalf, for he is the Propitiation for our Sins, 1 John

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Add, to this, That the Covenant of Grace which is feal'd to us in this Ordinance, is fo well order'd in all things, and so sure, that every Transgreffion in the Covenant doth not presently throw us cut of Covenant. We do not stand upon the same Terms that Adam in Innocency did, to whom the least Failoure was fatal; No, to us God hath proclaim'd his Name gracious and merciful, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin: If we mourn for our Sins of daily Infirmity, are asham'd of them, and humble our selves for them; if we strive and watch, and pray against them, we may be fure, they shall not be laid unto our Charge, but in Christ Tesus they shall be forgiven to us, for we are under Grace, and not under the Law. The God we are in covenant with is a God of Pardon, Neb. 9. 17. with him there is forgiveness, Psal. 130. 4. We are instructed to pray for daily Pardon as duly as we pray for daily Bread; and are encourag'd to come boldin to the Throne of Grace for Mercy: So that though there he a remembrance made of Sins every day, yet thanks be to God there may be a remembrance made of the Sacrifice for Sin, by which an Everlasting Righteousness was brought in.

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Thirdly, Are we disquieted and discouraged by the sad Remainders of Indwelling Corruption? We may from hence derive Support under this Burthen. All that are enlightned from on high, lament the Original Sin, that dwelleth in them, as much as the Actual Transgressions, that are committed by them; not only that they are defective in doing their Duty, but that they labour under a Natural Weakness, and Inability for it;

not only that they are often overtaken in a fault, but that they have a Natural Proneness and Inclination to that which is Evil. 'Twas the bitter Complaint of Blessed Paul himself, O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death? Rom. 7. 24. and it is the Complaint of all that are spiritually alive, while they are here in this imperfect State.

The most intelligent find themselves in the dark, and apt to mistake; the most contemplative find themselves unfixed and apt to wander: The most active for God find themselves dull and apt to tire; when the Spirit through Grace is willing, yet the Flesh is weak, and when we would do good, evil is present with us. Corrupt Appetites and Passions often get head, and betray us into many Indecencies. This makes the Heart sad, and the Hands feeble, and by reason of those many remaining Corruptions a good Christian lose the Comfort of his Graces. These Canaanites in the Land are as Thorns in the Eyes, and Goads in the side of many an Israelite.

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But be not cast down my Soul; the Covenant which was seal'd to thee at the Table of the Lord, was a Covenant of Grace which accepts Sincerity as Gospel Perfection, not a Covenant of Innocency, which accepts of nothing less than a finless spotless Purity. Were not these Complaints poured out before the Lord, and did he not fay, My Grace is sufficient for thee? and what can'st thou desire more? 2 Cor. 12.9. Were not Orders given at the Banquet of Wine, for the crucifying of the Adverary and Enemy, this wicked Haman, so that tho' it be not yet dead, it is a Body of Death, and e're long it shall be put off for ever? Was it not there aid to thee, was it not feal'd, That Sin shall not have Dominion over thee; but the God of Peace Shall ruise Satan under thy Feet shortly; so that though he 04 may 296 Comfort's drawn from the Lord's Supper.

may for a while disturb thy Peace, and his Troops may foil thee, yet like Gad in Faceb's Bleffing. thou shalt overcome at the last, Gen. 49. 18. The bruised Reed shall not be broken, nor the smoaking Flax quenched, but Judgment shall in due time be brought forth unto Victory, Grace shall get the upper Hand of Corruption, and be a Conquerour, yea, more than a Conquerour through him that loved us. Come then, come fet thy Feet upon the Necks of thele Kings, and rejoice in hope of a compleat Victory at last. These Lusts which war against thee make war with the Lamb too, and oppose his Interests, but for certain the Lamb shall overcome shem, for he is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful, Rev. 17.14. Thou haft feen on how firm a Rock the Kingdom of God within thee is built. and may'it be fure that the Gases of Hell Mall not prevail against it. Christ hath given thee a Banner to be disp'ny'd because of the Truth, and through him thou shalt do valiantly, for he it is that shall tread down thine Enemies, Pfal. 60. 4, 12.

Go on (my Soul) go on to fight the Lord's Battles, by a vigorous Refistance of Sin and Saran: maintain a conflant Guard upon all the Motions of thy Spiritual Enemies, hold up the Shield of Faith, and draw the Sword of the Spirit against all their Affaults: Suppress the first Risings of Corruption, make no Provision for it, resolve not to yield to it, walk in the Spirit that thou may'ft not fulfil the Lusts of the Flesh; never make League with these Canaanites, but vex these Midianites, and smite abem; mortify this Body of Death, and all its Members; strengthen such Principles, and dwell upon such Considerations as are proper for the weakning of the Power of Sinful Lufts. then be of good Comfort, this House of Saul shall go weaker and weaker, and the House of David Aronger

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Comforts drawn from the Lord's Supper. 297 stronger and stronger. Thou hast seen, my Soul, thou haft tafted the Bread and Wine which the Lord Jesus that blessed Melchizedek, has provided for the Support and Refreshment of all the Followers of faithful Abraham, when they return weary (and wounded perhaps) from their Spiritual Conthicts: Make use of this Provision then, feast upon it daily, and go on in the strength of it: Thank God (as St. Paul did in the midft of these Complaints) for Jefus Christ, who not only hath pray'd for thee that thy Faith fail not, but is now like Moles interceding on the top of the Hill, while thou art like Joshua fighting with these Amalekites in the Valley. Be faithful therefore to the Death, and thou shalt shortly have a Place in that New Jerusalem, into which no unclean thing shall enter. Now thou groanest, being burthen'd; but in Heaven there shall be none of these Complaints, nor any Cause for them.

Fourthly, Doth the Trouble arise from prevailing Doubts and Fears about the Spiritual State? We may draw that from this Ordinance which will help us to filence those Fears, and solve those Doubts, and to clear it up to us that God in Christ is ours, and we are his, and that all shall be well shortly. Many good Christians, though they are so far willing to hope the best concerning themselves, as not to decline coming to the Lord's Table, and there perhaps they meet with some Satisfaction, yet afterwards the Tide of their Comforts ebbs, a Sadnels fiezeth their Spirits, the Peace they have had they suipect to have been a Delusion, and are ready to give up all for gone; Unbelief makes hard Conclutions, clouds the Evidences, shakes the Hopes, withers the Joys, suggests that it is as good give off all pious Pursuits, as thus keep them up in vain; as good make a Captain, and return into Egypt as perio

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298 Comforts drawn from the Lord's Supper.

perish in this Wilderness, for this is not the way to Canaan: And thus many are kept from entring into the present Sabbatism, or Rest, which is intended for the People of God in this Life by Un-

belief, Heb. 4.9, 11.

But, O thou of little Faith, wherefore dost thou doubt? Come, call to remembrance the former days, the former Sacrament Days, and the fweet Communion thou had ft with God in them; Days never to be forgotten. Thou doubtest whether God loves thee? and thou art ready to fay as they did, Mal. 1. 2. Wherein bath he leved me? But dost thou not remember the Love-tokens he gave thee at his Table, when he embraced thee in the Arms of his Grace, kiffed thee with the Kiffes of his Mouth, and his Banner over thee was Love. Thou doubtest whether thou be a Child of God, and a chosen Vessel or no, and art sometimes tempted to say, Surely the Lord bath utterly Separated me from his People, and I am a dry Tree, Ifa. 56.3. How should he fet me among the Children, and give me a pleafant Land? Fer. 3, 19. But dost thou not remember the Children's Bread thou hast been fed with at thy Father's Table, and the Spirit of Adoption there fent forth into thy Heart, teaching thee to cry, Abba, Father? Thou called'st thy self a Prodigal, and no more worthy to be accounted a Son, because thou didst bear the Reproach of thy Youth, which made thee ashamed, yea, even confounded: But did not God at the same time call thee as he did penitent Ephraim, a dear Son, a pleasant Child, were not bis Bowels troubled for thee ? and did he not lay, I will furely have mercy on thee? Fer. 31. 18, 19, 20. Did not thy Father meet thee with tender Compassions? Did he not call for the best Robe, and put it on thee? Did he not invite thee to the fatted or alf? and, which was best of all, give thee a Kiss which scal'd the Pardon? And wilt thou now

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Comforts drawn from the Lord's Supper. 299 call that Point in question which was then so well fettled? Is God a Man that he should ly, or the San of Man that he should repent? No, he is God and not Man. Thou doubtest whether Christ be thine or no? Whether thou hast any Interest in his Mediation and Intercession, whether he dy'd for thee or no? But didft thou not at his Table accept of him to be thine, and consent to him upon his own Terms? Didst thou not fay to him with thy Finger in the Print of the Nails, My Lord, and my God! And did he not answer thee with good Words. and comfortable Words, faying unto thee, Iam tly Salvation? Hast thou revok'd the Bargain? Or, dost thou fear that he will revoke it? Was it not an Everlasting Covenant, never to be forgotten? W.y art thou troubled? and why do thoughts arise in thy Heart? Was not Christ present with thee, and did he not shew himself well affected to thee, when at his Table he said to thee, Behold my Hands and my Feet, that it is I my felf, Luke 24. 38, 39. - Thou doubtest whether thou hast any Grace or no, any. Love to God, any Faith, any Repentance? Bur haft thou forgotten God's Workings on thy Hear, and the Workings of thy Heart towards God at his Table? Did not thine Heart burn within thee, when thy dear Redeemer talked with thee there? Did'it. thou not fit down under his Shadow with delight, and fay, It is good to be here? Did'ft thou not defire a. Sign of the Lord, a Token for good? Did'ft thou not say, Do not deceive me? And was there not a Token for good show'd thee? Was not thy Hearts melted for Sin? Was it not drawn out towards. God? Did it not appear that God was with thee of a Truh? Wherefore then doft thou doubt of that which thou had'ft then fuch comfortable Evidences of ? Way Sayest thou O Facob, and speak st O Israel. My way is hid from the Lord, and my Judgment is passed over from my God? Why dost thous

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300 Comforts drawn from the Lerd's Supper.

thou entertain such hard thoughts of God and thy own State? Hast thou not known? Hast thou not keard? That the Everlasting God, even the Lord, the Creator of the Ends of the Earth, fainteth not,

neither is weary, Ifn. 40. 27, 28.

And why art thou fearful and faint-hearted? Why doft thou look forward with Terrour and Trembling, while thou haft so much reason to look forward with Hope and Rejoicing? Alas (faith the troubled Spirit) God hath call me off out of his Sight, and I fear will cast off for ever, and will be favourable no more : I stall no more feethe Lord, even the Lord in the Land of the Living! My Comforts. are removed, and all my pleasant things are laid waste! My bones are dried, my hope is left, and I am cut off for my part, Ezek. 37. 11. But hearken to this, thou that thus fearest continually every day: Dost thou not remember the Encouragements. Christ gave thee at his Table to hope in him, and to expect all good from him? Did he not fay, I will never teave thee nor for fake thee; and did'ft not thou promise, that thou would'st never leave nor forfake him? Nay, did not he promise to put his fear into thy Heart, that thou might ft not depart from bim? He did: And is not he faithful that bath called thee, faithful that hath promised who also will do it? Thou are afraid that some time or other Satan will be too hard for thee, and thou halt one day periffs by his Hand: But hast thou not had that precious Promise seal'd to thee? that the faithful God will never fuffer thee to be tempted above what thou art able ; but will with the Tempeation make a way for thee to escape, 1 Cor. 10. 13. His Providence fliall proportion the Trial to the Strength; or, (which comes all to one) his Grace thall proportion the Strength to the Trial. Thou art afraid, that after all thou shalt come short; that by reason of the violence of the Storm, the Treachery of the Sea.

Comforts drawn from the Lord's Supper. 301 Sea, and especially thine own weakness and unskilfulness, thou shalt never be able to weather the Point, and get fafe into the Harbour at last: But shall I ask thee, thou that followest Christ thus trembling, Dost thou not know whom thou hast believed? Is thy Salvation intrusted with thy felf. and lodg'd in thy own Hands? No it is not, if it were, thou would'ft have reason to fear the loss of it: But, hath not God committed it, and haft not thou committed it to the Lord Jefus? And is not he able to keep that which is committed to him against that day? that great day when it shall be call'd for? Is not that a Divine Power that keeps thee? a Divine Promise that secures thee? Be not fearful then, Be not faithless, but believing.

Fifthly, Are we disquieted and discourag'd by the Troubles and Calamities of this Life? From our Communion with God in the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, we may fetch Comfort and Support under all the Afflictions of this present time. whatever they be. Our Master instituted this Sacrament in the Night wherein he was betray'd, and foon after he put off the Body, and pleasantly said. Now I am no more in the World; but when we have received this Sacrament, we find our felyes still in a World, which is Vexation of Spirit; the Soul still in a House of Clay, liable to many Shakes, and so close is the Union between the Soul and the Body, that what toucheth the Bone and the Flesh; cannot but affect the Spirit at second hand. We are born and born again to trouble. Besides that. we are exposed with others to the common Calamities of Human Life, and the Perfecutions which all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus must count upon; we are under the Discipline of Sons, and must look for Chastisement. Afflictions are not only confistent with the Love of God, but they

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flow from it; As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: They are not only reconcileable with the Covenant, but a Branch of it -- I will chasten their Transgression with the Rod, and their Sin with Stripes, is an Article of the Agreement with David and his Seed, with this comfortable Clause added, Nevertheless my Loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him. -- My Covenant will I not break, Psal.

89. 32, 33.

There is no disputing against Sense: Christianity was not defign d to make Men Stocks, and Stones. and Stoicks, under their Calamities. No Affliction for the present is joyous but grievous. Hence the best Men, as they have their Share of Trouble, fo they cannot but have the Sense of it; That's allow'd them, they groan being burthened: But this Sense of Troubles is apt to exceed due Bounds: 'Tis hard to grieve, and not to over-grieve; to lay to heart an Affliction, and not lay it too near the Heart. When Grief for any outward Trouble overwhelms our Spirits, embitters our Comforts, hinders our Joy in God, stops the Mouth of Praise, takes off our Chariot-Wheels, and makes us drive heavily in our way to Heaven, then it is excessive and inordinate, and turns into Sin to us. When Sorrow fills the Heart, and plays the Tyrant there, when it makes us freeful and impatient, and breaks out in Quarrels with God and his Providence. and robs us of the Enjoyment of our felves, our Friends, and our God, it is an Enemy that we are concern'd to take up Arms against.

And from our Sacramental Covenants and Comforts, we may fetch plenty of Arguments against the unreasonable Insinuations of inordinate Grief. Did I not see at the Table of the Lord a lively Representation of the Sufferings of Christ, the Variety and Extremity of his Sufferings? Did I not fee his Tears, his Sweats, his Agonies, his Stripes;

Comforts drawn from the Lord's Supper. 303 the Pain and Shame he underwent? And is the Servant better than his Master, and the Disciple than his Lord? Did Christ go by the Cross to the Crown, and shall a Christian expect to go any other way? The Captain of our Salvation was made perfect through Sufferings, and have not we much more need of them for the perfecting of what is lacking in us? Is not this one part of our Conformity to the Image of Christ, that as he was a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief, so we should be, that he might be the first-born among many Brethren? A Sight of Christ's Afflictions should reconcile us to our own: Especially if we consider, not only what he fuffer'd, but how he fuffer'd; with what an invincible Parience, and chearful Submission to his Father's Will, leaving us an Example, 1 Pet. 2. 21. Have we so oft celebrated the Memorial of Christ's Sufferings, and have we not yet learn'd of him to fay, The Cup that my Father bath given me, shall I not drink it? though it be a bitter Cup. Father, not my Will but thy Will be done. Have we not yet learn'd of him, who was led as a Lamb to the Slaughter, to be dumb, and not to open our Membs against any thing that God doth, to forgive our Enemies, and pray for our Perfecutors, and chearfully to commit our felves to him. that judgeth righteously? Let the same Mind be in us which here we have feen to be in Christ Jesus.

Yet this is not all: In the Lord's Supper we gave up our selves, and all we have unto the Lord, with a Promise to acquiesce in all the Disposals of his Providence concerning us and ours; let us not therefore by our Discontent and Uneasiness, revoke the Surrender that we then made, or go counter to it. We there said it, and seal'd it, that we would be the Lord's, and may he not do what he will with his own, especially when it is so by our own Conseat; God there said it and seal'd it to us,

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that he would be to us a Father, and can we take any thing amiss from a Father, such a Father, who never chastens us but for our Profit, that we may be Partakers of his Holiness? Inviolable Assurances were there given to us, That all things should work together for our present good, and for our future glory: That as Afflictions abound, Confolations shall so much the more abound, and some Experience we there had of the Sweetness and Power of those Consolations, which we ought to treasure up. that we may have them ready for our Supports in the Evil Day. Can we forget how fweet God's Smiles were which there we faw? How reviving his Comforts were which there we tafted? and are not those sufficient to countervail the loss of the World's flattering Smiles, and the Comforts we have in the Creature? 'Tis generally suppos'd, that, that comfortable Sermon which Christ preach'd to his Disciples on that Text, Let not your Heart be troubled, John 14. immediately follow'd the Administration of the Lord's Supper; for it is the Will of Christ, that those whom he hath raised up to sit with him by Faith in Heavenly Places. should not be cast down or disquieted for any Cross or Disappointment in Earthly things.

Art thou fick ? Languishing perhaps under some wasting Distemper, which consumes the Strength and Beauty like a Moth? or chaften'd it may be with Pain upon the Bed, and the multitude of the Bones with from Pain? Or labouring under the Infirmities and Decays of Old Age? Take comfort then from thy Communion with the Lord at his Table. Did'ft thou not fee there how Christ himfelf bore our Sicknesses, and carried our Sorrows, then when he bore our Sins in his own Body upon the Tree, and so took away the Sting of them; extracted out of them the Wormwood and the Gall, which he himself drunk in a bitter Cup, and infus'd

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Comforts drawn from the Lord's Supper. 305 fus'd into them the Comforts of his Love, which he hath given us to drink of? Did'ft thou not there receive a fealed Pardon? Did not God in love to thy Soul, cast all thy Sins behind his Back, and tell thee fo? Thou hast then no reason to complain of bodily Diftempers: Ifa. 33. 24. The Inhabitants Shall not Jay, I am fick: How so? How can one that is fick, avoid faying, I am fick? Why, it follows, the People that dwell therein shall be forgiven their Iniquity. And Sickness is nothing, or next nothing, to those who know that their Sins are pardon'd. When thou did'st present thy Body to God in that Ordinance a living Sacrifice, and did'st engage that it should be for the Lord, was it not graciously added, -- And the Lord for the Body? 1 Cor. 6.13. And if the Lord be for thy Body, he will frengthen the upon the Bed of languishing, and tho' he may not presently help thee off it, yet he will set by thee, and which speaks the wonderful Condescension of Divine Goodness, he will make all thy Bed in thy Sickness, Plal. 41.3. And that Bed cannot but be made easy which he hath the making of.

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Art thou poor? cross'd in thine Affairs, disappointed in lawful and hopeful Defigns? clog'd with Cares? and perhaps reduced to Straits? Let the Spiritual Riches secur'd to thee in that sealing Ordinance, be a Ballance to the Affliction of outward Poverty. The God of Truth hath faid it, and thou may'ft rely upon it, that those that fear him and feek him, shall not want any good thing; not any thing that Infinite Wildom lees really good for them. Trust in the Lord therefore, and do good with the little thou hast, so shalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou shalt be fed, Psal. 37. 3. It is not promis'd that thou shalt be feasted with Varieties and Dainties; those that are feasted at God's Table need not complain, tho' they be not feafted at their own: But thou shalt be fed, fed with Food

convenient for thee. Some good Christians that have been in a very poor condition, have said, That they have many a Meal's Meat upon the Promises, when they wanted Bread. Ve ity thou shalt be fed: Pascere Fide: So the learned Junius reads it: Be fed by Faith, and compares it with Hab. 2. 4. the Just shall live by his Faith, and good living, good feeding it is. Tho the Fig-tree do not blossom, and there be no Fruit in the Vine, yet while thou hast in the Lord's Supper seen the Rose of Sharon blossoming, and tasted the Fruit of the true Vine, thou hast reason enough however it be, to rejoice in the Lord, and to joy in the God of thy Salvation, Hab. 3. 17, 18.

Are thy Relations a Grief to thee? Do those afflict thee of whom thou said'st, those same shall comfort me? Suppose the Yokefellow unsuitable, Children undutiful, Parents unkind, Friends ungrateful, Neighbours injurious; yet the Comfort of our Relation to God may suffice to make up the loss of Comfort in any Relation on Earth. If Man be false, yet God is faithful: If Man be harsh, yet God is gracious. Though the Waters of our Rivers may be mudded, or turn'd into Blood, yet the Fountain of Life runs always clear, and its Streams are pure as Chrystal, Rev. 22. 1. 'Twas upon the Supposition of Family Disappointments that David in his last Words took Comfort from the Covenant of Grace made with him, 2 Sam. 23.5.

Are those that are dear to thee removed from thee by Death? 'Tis fit that which is so sown should be water'd: But Sacrament Comforts will keep us from sorrowing, as those that have no hope for them that sleep in Jesus. We have lost the Satisfaction we us'd to have in them; but is not God better to us than ten Sons; far better than ten thousand such Relations could have been. And yet they are not lost, they are only gone before, and Death

Death it self cannot wholly cut us off from Communion with them, for we are come to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and hope to be with them

Mortly, Heb. 12.23.

Are the Calamities of the Church, and of the Nation our Affliction? 'Tis fit they should be so, for we have eaten and drunk into the great Body, and as living Members must feel from its Grievances: But in the Lord's Supper we have seen what Provision the Grace of God hath made for his Houshold, and from thence may infer the Protection under which the Providence of God will always keep it safe. The Promises that are seal'd to us, are sure to all the Seed, and the Covenant of Grace is the Rock on which the Church is built so firm, that the Gates of Hell shall never prevail against it. The Lord (we see) hath sounded Sion, and the Poor of his People shall trust to that. Let us at this Ordinance learn this new Song, and sing it oft, Hallelujah, The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

Sixthly, Are the Fears of Death a Trouble and Terrour to us? We may fetch from the Lord's Supper that which will enable us through Grace to triumph over these Fears. This is a Fear which is often found to have Torment, and by reason of it, many weak Christians have been all their lifetime subject to Bondage, Heb. 2. 15. 'Tis likewise a Fear which often brings a Snare, exposeth us to many Temptations, and gives Satan advantage against us. There are many, who we hope through Grace are saved from the Second Death, and yet are afraid of the First Death, being more sollicitous than they need to be about a dying Life, and more timerous than they need to be of a living Death, a Death that is their way to Life.

But the Arrests of Death, and its Harbingers would not be at all dreadful, if we did but know how to make a due Improvement of the Comforts we were made Partakers of at the Table of the Lord. We there faw Christ dying, dying fo great a Death, a Death in Pomp, arm'd and attended with all its Terrours, dying in Pain, in Shame, in Darkness, in Agonies, and yet the Son of God, and the Heir of all things. This takes off the Reproach of Death, so that now we need not be asham'd to die: If Christ humbled himself, and became obedient to Death, why should not we? It likewise takes off the Terrour of Death, so that now we need not be afraid to dy. When we walk through that dark and difinal Valley, we have no reason to fear any Evil, while the great Shepherd of the Sheep is not only gone before us, but goes along with us, his Rod and his Staff they comfort us, Pfal. 23. 4. He is our Leader, and we do not approve our felves his good Souldiers, if we be not willing to follow him whithersoever he goes. He went through Death to the Joy set before him, and we cannot expect to follow him to that Joy, but in that way. Thro' this Fordan we must enter Canaan.

The Death of Christ hath broken the Power of Death, and taken from it all the Armour wherein it trusted, so that now let it do its worst, it cannot do a good Christian any real Prejudice, for it cannot separate him from the Love of God. Surely the bitterness of Death is now past, by Christ's tasting it, (Heb. 2. 9.) The Sharpness of Death Christ hath overcome, by submitting to it, and so hath open'd the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers. The sucking Child may now play upon this Hole of the Asp, and the weaned Child may put his Hand on this Cockatrice Den; for Death it self shall not burt or destroy in all God's Holy Mountain.

Nay, The Death of Christ hath quite alter'd the Property of Death. It not only ceaseth to be an Enemy, but it is become a Friend: The Covenant of Grace seal'd to us in the Lord's Supper, assures us of the unspeakable kindness that even Death it self shall do us. All things are yours — and Death among the rest, 1 Cor. 3. 22. As the Death of Christ was the Purchase of our Happiness, so our own Death is the Passage to our Happiness; it dischargeth us from our Prison, and conveys us to our Palace. The Promise of Eternal Life seal'd to us, and the Earnests of that Life communicated to us in this Ordinance, enable us to look with comfort on t'other side Death, and then we need not look with Terrour on this side it.

Art thou afraid to give up thy Soul? Thou hak already given it up to God in Christ to be sanctified, and therefore may'st then with a Holy Chearfulness give it up to God in Christ to be sav'd. The Dying Jesus by committing his Spirit into the Hands of his Father, hath embolden'd all his Followers in a dying Hour to do the same. Why should that Soul be afraid to go out of the Body, and quit this World of Sense, which is through Grace ally'd to, and by Faith acquainted with the Blessed World of Spirits, and is sure of a Guard of Angels ready to convey it to that World, and a faithful Friend ready to receive it into that World.

Art thou afraid to put off thy Body? The Covenant feal'd to thee at the Lord's Table is a Covenant with thy Dust, and gives Commandment concerning thy Bones. Fear not the Return of thine Earth to its Earth, 'tis in order to its being resin'd, and in due time restor'd to its Soul, a glorious and incorruptible Body. Spiritual Blessings are perhaps for this reason in the Sacraments represented and applied by outward and sensible Signs, in the

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Participation of which, the Body is concern'd, that we might thereby be confirm'd in our believing Hope of the Glory prepar'd and referv'd for these Bodies of ours, these vile Bodies, which even while they lie in the Grave still remain united to Christ, and when they shall be rais'd our of the Grave,

shall be made like unto his glorious Body.

Let the Sinners in Sion be afraid to dy, let fearfulness surprize the Hypocrites, when their Souls shall be requir'd of them: Let their Hearts meditate Terrour, and their Faces gather blackness, who having liv'd a carnal, worldly, sensual Life, have no interest in Christ and the Promises, for they shall call in vain to Rocks and Mountains to shelter them from the Wrath of the Lamb: But let them that have joined themselves to the Lord in an Everlasting Covenant, and have obtained Mercy of the Lord to be faithful to that Covenant, lift up their Heads with Joy, for their Redemption draws nigh. Death will shortly rend the Interposing Veil of Sense and Time, will shortly scatter all the dark and threatning Clouds which here hang over our Heads, and will open to us a bright and glorious Scene in that bleffed World of Light, Life, and Love, where we shall enjoy the Substance of those things which at the Lord's Table we are refresh'd with the Shadows of; and the full Vintage of those Toys which here we have the First-Fruits of.

Learn then, my Soul, learn thou to triumph over Death and the Grave, O Death where is thy Sting? O Grave where is thy Victory? Having laid up thy Treasure within the Veil, and remitted thy best Effects, and best Affections thither, and having received the Earnest of the Purchased Possession, be still looking, still longing for that blessed Hope. Fear not Death, for it cannot hurt thee, but defire

fire it rather, for it will greatly befriend thee. When the Earthly House of this Tabernacle shall be dissolved, thou shalt remove to the House not made with Hands Eternally in the Heavens. Wish then, wish daily for the coming of thy Lord, for he shall appear to thy Joy. The Vision is for an appointed time, and at the End it shall speak, and shall not lie. Look through the Windows of this House of Clay, like the Mother of Sisera, when she waited for her Sons Triumphs, and cry through the Lattes, Why is his Chariots? Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.

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